

dissent

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Enemy Colleagues

A Reading of The Salvador Tragedy

GABRIEL ZAID

- *Shuffling Back and Forth
Between Junta & Guerrillas
- *The Elites Change,
The People Suffer
- *The Power of Abstention
- *Is There a Way Out?

THE CRISIS IN POLAND — SEE BACK COVER



Franz
Borkenau

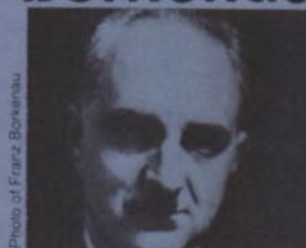


Photo of Franz Borkenau

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Beyond the Welfare State

Edited by Irving Howe

In the face of Reagan administration cutbacks in social programs, it may seem optimistic to put together a book about going *beyond* the welfare state. But the reaction against welfare may prove to be the final effort of the American right to return to a *laissez-faire* economy, which existed in theory but never in fact. In the belief that a modern industrial society must accept a large amount of governmental intervention, Irving Howe introduces some of the major social critics of our time who examine the inner dynamics and problems of the welfare state and its prospects for the future. These authors, all contributors to *Dissent* magazine, show why the welfare programs have failed both here and abroad and what could be done to make them succeed.

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Robin Hood in Reverse

The Republican tax cut may well be the most irresponsible tax measure in history. The combination of individual tax cuts slanted to the rich, inflationary business tax cuts, and special-interest provisions will not encourage orderly economic growth and will produce huge budget deficits. In effect President Reagan has abandoned his campaign promise to balance the budget. Instead he has succeeded in setting the stage for a transfer of hundreds of billions of dollars from middle- and low-income taxpayers to the wealthy.

Almost exclusively Reagan's individual income-tax cuts will benefit upper-income taxpayers—who already are less vulnerable to inflation and cuts in government programs than are the poor. Unlike the tax cuts of the 1970s, this act does not increase the personal exemption or standard deduction to keep up with inflation (until indexing arrives in 1985). Therefore, in effect, the share of income which is tax-free shrinks in the next three years. An across-the-board cut in income-tax rates does not provide equal savings to all taxpayers. The biggest benefit by far, both in dollars and as a percentage of after-tax income, goes to those in the highest income brackets. . . .

Social Security Tax Increases

- *Most U.S. Taxpayers* make less than \$20,000 and pay more in Social Security taxes than they do in federal income taxes. These people will not benefit from the Reagan tax package. Because of increases in Social Security taxes—levied by Congress in the last five years in order to avoid a mythical "bankruptcy" of the Social Security system—most taxpayers will pay out a greater percentage of their income in taxes during the next five years than they did during the last five. That is why Reagan's so-called tax cut is not a tax cut at all but a massive shift of the tax burden, away from those who are best able to bear it to those least able to do so.

Social Security taxes and other compulsory "contributions for social insurance" (unemployment and workers' compensation and government employee pensions, etc.) are the most rapidly growing category of taxes, accounting for 26 percent of all taxes in 1980, up from 17 percent in 1965. Two-thirds of these payroll taxes consist of federal Social Security taxes. In terms of total federal revenue raised, Social Security taxes produce only slightly less revenue than federal income taxes.

A single Social Security tax rate, currently 13.3 percent, is levied on each worker's wage or salary up to \$29,700 per year, for a maximum tax of \$3,950. Half of the tax is paid by the employer, the other half by the employee, but there is little doubt that the employer's share is passed on to the average worker in the form of lower wages.

The Impact of the Budget

- *On Our Elderly Citizens* • The budget cuts' total effect on the elderly cannot be precisely calculated, but any reasonable analysis must conclude that it will be devastating. According to a study by the *North Carolina Senior Citizens Federation*, reduced aid to the elderly will result in "hundreds of deaths, and thousands of people suffering severe hardship, and irreparable physical or mental damage." This is because, under President Reagan, the federal government is reneging on many decades-old commitments to older Americans and because the budget cuts destroy or weaken the so-called safety-net programs critical to their very lives: Social Security, Medicaid, Food Stamps, housing, energy assistance, and social services. Indeed, these cuts mean—together with the termination of the Community Services Administration—that there is *no* "safety net" and *no* guarantee that the needs of 6 million elderly poor will be met.

- *On Our Children* • The budget cuts will hurt children more than any other group because they are the most vulnerable members of our society. Many government programs that are not specifically related to children nevertheless are extremely important to their welfare.

More important, however, programs that directly aid children have been cut with special severity: nutrition, education, and health programs. Child nutrition programs—including School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food, and the Child Care Food Program—have been cut from \$4.3 billion to \$2.8 billion or 34.9 percent. Some 52 percent of Food Stamp recipients are children, and this program has been cut from \$12.3 billion to \$10.6 billion in F.Y. '82. Eligibility for the School Lunch program has been severely narrowed, up to 40 percent for middle-income children, and these cuts will force many schools to close their lunch and breakfast programs entirely, leaving many eligible poor children without those meals. □

From "The Reagan Budget and its Impact on Americans," a publication of the Americans for Democratic Action (copies can be ordered by writing to ADA, 1411 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005).

Bogdan Denitch

The Rebellion of Europe

An unanticipated consequence of the Reagan administration's foreign and defense postures may well be the creation of a massive West European peace movement. This movement has spread throughout the NATO alliance. Not having a unified direction, it shows great local variety in emphasis, popularity, and impact on governments and opposition parties. More skeptical about the Soviet Union than previous antinuclear and peace movements, this current movement nevertheless is directed at the NATO alliance and the "special relationship" to the United States. Thus, thanks to the new Administration in Washington, an increasingly independent Western Europe is emerging as a force with autonomous needs and priorities vis à vis the superpower confrontation.

The major issues in dispute are deep-seated and difficult to resolve. The West Europeans have had a far more direct stake in détente, economically, than the United States. They are far more dependent on oil imports, much too dependent (one might argue) to allow their needs to be insured by the degree of skill the U.S. will show in managing the Middle Eastern situation. The West Europeans—and this is by no means limited to the socialist left—are skeptical about the utility of viewing every Third World revolt in terms of U.S.-Soviet confrontation, and they increasingly distrust not only U.S. motives but also U.S. judgment.

This distrust is not eased by staffing the U.S. delegation to the U.N. with *Commentary* "think tankers," the gratuitous repeal of the Clark amendment, the courtship of the South African regime and Latin American dictatorships, or by Reagan's generous advice to the poor countries to trust in the miracles of the free market. The U.S. is, in short, perceived as ideologically mesmerized by a new confrontational get-tough policy vis à vis the Soviets, and it is in this context that the U.S. proposals for theater nuclear forces (TNF) are judged.

A new feature in most of the peace demonstra-

tions is the absence of Communist leadership and slogans or, more precisely, the absence of *pro-Russian* illusions and slogans. In Britain E. P. Thompson, probably the most effective leader, speaks out in support of the free Polish trade unions and calls for antinuclear mobilization *within* the Soviet alliance. The Italian peace marchers denounce the Soviet nuclear build-up and the SS-20 rockets while also opposing the stationing of U.S. nuclear missiles on Italian soil. The Dutch and Belgian peace marchers call for negotiations for a nuclear-free Europe (East *and* West). In Scandinavia the call for a nuclear-free zone clearly is directed against the Soviets as well as against NATO. The left-wing Social Democrats in the German Federal Republic combine opposition to new nuclear weapons on their soil with support for the Polish workers and East German dissidents.

It is not merely that, in Western Europe, the Soviet Union has no appeal as a model. The Soviet bloc is seen as far more vulnerable internally and more like any other imperial power externally than at any time in the past. Poland and Afghanistan are not manifestations of the strength and appeal of Russian communism. Within this context it is possible to think in terms of a peace movement that does not automatically act as a pawn for one of the superpowers.

Competent observers can differ about the exact state of East-West military balance. After all,

Coming

The complex issues raised by Bogdan Denitch in his brief comment will be discussed at greater length in the next issue of *Dissent*. We are planning a special section taking up these matters from a variety of viewpoints. — EDS.

much depends on judgment. How many Soviet divisions have to be stationed on the long frontier with China? How effective is military technology and hardware on the two sides? What difference do the more sophisticated antiarmor rockets and munitions make in considering the Russian superiority in tanks? To what extent are the SS-20s simply a modernization of existing forces? Does a general detente in Europe require "good behavior" in the rest of the world—the old linkage problem? Has not the U.S. also developed unilateral advantages—in the Middle East, in cruise missiles, etc.? These and many other questions can legitimately be asked and debated. But there are three major considerations that motivate the massive peace and antinuclear demonstrations in Western Europe: (1) an increasing distrust of U.S. policy-makers' judgment and motives; (2) fear that Europe will be targeted through the stationing of new missiles for nuclear destruction even if there is no total war between the United States and the Soviet Union (the whole problem of whether there is such a thing as a *tactical* nuclear weapon and

whether the two superpowers can agree to a limited nuclear exchange); (3) the increasing belief among West European strategists and informed publics that the Russians are *not* coming—that the old military scenario of a massive Soviet tank assault across the West German plains is simply not probable in the foreseeable future. Thus the deployment of new nuclear rockets has little defensive function and is part of the general "get tough" strategy on which the U.S. has decided after getting over its post-Vietnam syndrome. While not of much obvious military value, however, the new rockets do endanger the West European population by making it a pawn in the superpower struggle.

IN THE UNITED STATES, much of the debate about the use of the theater nuclear forces is particularly archaic and seems to ignore at least two European realities. We tend to forget that it is U.S. rockets with the U.S. finger on the trigger that are to be installed in Western Europe. The question may well come up: what do they add to the U.S. triad of

Nuclear War Gossip

On October 21, 1981 much of the world outside Washington was dismayed by two statements, from leading U.S. policy-makers, which revealed that in inner government circles the prospect of nuclear war with Russia is looked on with increasing equanimity. The first came from Major General Robert Schweitzer, chief military adviser for the National Security Council, who told a gathering of the Association of the U.S. Army that we were witnessing a "drift towards war," and were now in "the greatest danger that the republic has faced since its founding days." The same day brought the substance of an interview President Reagan had granted to newspaper editors several days before, in the course of which he was asked: "Do you believe that there could be a limited exchange of nuclear weapons between us and the Soviet Union or that it would simply escalate inevitably?" Unshocked by the omission of a plausible *tertium quid*—that we contemplate no "exchange" of any sort—the president gave the following immortal reply.

I don't honestly know. I think, again, until someplace—all over the world this is being, research is going on, to try and find the defensive weapon. There never has been a weapon that someone hasn't come up with a defense. But it could—and the only defense is, well, you shoot yours and we'll

shoot ours. And if you still had that kind of stalemate, I could see where you could have the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button.

— *New York Times*, October 21

Reagan outranks Schweitzer, so it was Schweitzer who was dismissed, on the ground that he failed to clear his statement with the White House. But he is said to be in line for a new job: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The president's vaguely expressed but quite genuine interest in what are now called *feasibility studies* is a good instance of what C. Wright Mills called *crackpot realism*. "You shoot yours and we'll shoot ours." This kind of talk confirms Europeans in their suspicion that war, let alone nuclear war, is as unreal to our president as it is to most of us. The world holds possibilities that are interesting to tease the mind with in proportion as they have not been experienced, and this seems to be one of them. No American alive today knows what it is for his own country to be attacked in war. Of all countries we are now the novices of suffering, and we should be glad of that; but our leaders show the alacrity of eager apprentices.

This naturally frightens—and sickens—our allies. They know that war, under the best of circumstances, is not a you-shoot-yours-and-we'll-shoot-ours affair; and oddly, even a war that *has* to be fought, such as the war against

nuclear weapons on submarines, in land-based silos in the U.S., and in airplane-delivered nukes? Each "leg" of the triad is supposed to be independently capable of inflicting sufficient damage on the opponent to act as a deterrent—and, in any case, the U.S. is intent on modernizing all three "legs." The West Europeans do not have to suffer from excessive paranoia to believe that the only real function of the rockets based in their countries is to guarantee that they will be targeted in the case of nuclear exchange.

A second element left out of most American debates is the presence of an independent French nuclear force, which is by no means negligible and makes any Soviet-U.S. understanding on limiting nuclear exchanges in Eastern and Western Europe unrealistic. The French simply reject the idea that a *tactical* or theater nuclear weapon might take aim at Paris or Warsaw, while sparing Washington and Moscow. This means that Europe must be regarded as an autonomous factor in the superpower confrontation.

The French example, however, poses a serious

question for the West European peace activists—and notice that no major mobilization has yet taken place in France against the French nuclear deterrent. There seems to be something close to a consensus in the otherwise fragmented French politics on defense or, rather, a consensus that France must have its own means of defense and its own independent policy. This issue has not been faced by most of the West European peace or, rather, antinuclear activists: if Europe is to be autonomous in the Soviet-American confrontation it must have its own defense policy, and that costs a good deal. The question is not: should Europe have its own nuclear weapons—since France already has them? It is: if one is opposed to the stationing of the nukes, must one not be armed (unless one is a pacifist) with a substantial conventional deterrent? A deterrent at least substantial enough to discourage adventures that might occur at some time in the future, given the uncertainties of the Brezhnev succession? One searches in vain—in Thompson's otherwise sensible speeches, or in the proposals of West Germany's antinuke

Hitler, does not leave the most steadfast soldiers with a taste for more. Nor do they want to hear their homelands talked of as a "theater" for tactical nuclear weapons, with all the consolation this implies of making an excellent show for the spectators. They see the neutron bomb as a weapon calculated to ease our thinking about war with the Russians, by screening out the thought of any unlucky consequences to ourselves. And these recent statements bear out their understanding of the newly feasible weapon.

When we hear statements like Reagan's or Schweitzer's, we can read them in two ways. Either the crazy idea just popped into their heads—in which case both men are dangerously incompetent if not deranged, and should at once be relieved of their posts. Or this is what is in the air; they said the sort of thing they hear said every day, and not only in meetings of the National Security Council; they were simply repeating what passed for the innocuous matter-of-fact sentiments of the hour in Washington, in the year 1981. In which case it is the reassurances following the statements that constitute the real danger, and defraud the public of what should be public knowledge. The Reagan-Schweitzer mentality is audible in more casual phrases that are too often left unquestioned. When we hear words like "appeasement" used against critics of Reagan's foreign policy, we

ought to consider very coolly to what extent the Russians resemble Hitler, whether, in fact, they have any similar plan for world-conquest; and how much we would cherish the world we had left to ourselves after a nuclear war however limited.

Let us acquit Reagan and Schweitzer of the charge that they are special cases. The same *Times* article cited an earlier incident of talking out of line, which nearly resulted in the dismissal last winter of Richard Pipes, "a Soviet specialist on Mr. Allen's staff who said in an interview . . . that war with the Soviet Union was inevitable unless Moscow changed its political system." Now Pipes, a man of great sophistication, knows what signs there have been since 1917 of a willingness to change, and what signs there are likely to be. He was therefore saying a good deal more than Schweitzer—he was saying, "Expect war." But Pipes, in the best Harvard tradition of courtly servility and a tenacious love of power, knew how to make his qualifications stick, and he remains on the scene.

Meanwhile another of Reagan's advisers, Eugene Rostow, tells an interviewer in the *Los Angeles Times* that it is a mistake to think that we are living in a postwar, as distinct from a prewar, period. But perhaps at heart Rostow is still an academic, and was only trying to get his periods right.

DAVID BROMWICH □

Social Democrats—for an outline of a defense policy *they* support for a Europe that is becoming increasingly independent of the traditional U.S.-dominated alliance system.

While the new peace movement has not yet dealt with the problem of what, if any, defense policy is appropriate for Europe, there are at least some examples of independent defense policies that can provide some guidelines. Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia have all tried to deal with this problem, and these three have come up with similar conclusions: broad citizen-based defense policies do not come cheap.

The peace movement indeed has transformed the political landscape of the NATO countries; it has had an impact beyond the traditional left, at least in the Benelux countries and Italy. There is a broad-based reluctance to get dragged into the present confrontation.

While there is a recognition that the Soviet Union has attempted to upset whatever the traditional balance was in Europe—if not by stationing the SS-20s then at least by the rate at which it continues to deploy them—the U.S. is seen as being primarily responsible for the new sharp turn in the arms race and the absence of any real negotiations. Failure to pass the SALT II treaties is having its effect. While it is true that the treaty would have done little, refusal to ratify even so limited an agreement makes the U.S. suspect as a serious partner in negotiations. After all, stationing the rockets in Europe was part of a deal that included negotiations. Yet this Administration clearly regards negotiations as something to engage in only to as minimal an extent as will satisfy the West Europeans. The U.S. has simply not learned how to deal with allies as distinct from dependents.

THE DISARRAY WITHIN NATO goes further and the strains are more basic than the peace demonstrations indicate. It is not just that huge mass demon-

strations are mobilizing more West Germans than did any previous peace movement. The Social Democrats are sharply split over the issue and the whole Social Democratic-Liberal alliance in Germany is in peril. If the SPD goes into opposition over this issue, it will probably emerge as far more of a socialist party than it is today; and if short-sighted experts in Washington look forward to a more conservative coalition in the Federal Republic, the long-range effect may well be a further shift to the left in Europe. NATO is clearly in trouble in Greece, and so long as this Administration in Washington persists in imposing its policies on the alliance, NATO will remain unpopular in Spain and increasingly under attack, in its present form, in Italy and in Great Britain. It is not only the British Labour party that has made clear its distaste for U.S. nuclear weapons on British soil; the Liberal half of Britain's new Social Democratic-Liberal alliance shares this policy.

The irony is that the only ally today *not* making policy problems for the United States in Europe is Mitterrand's French Socialist government, and that is in good measure because the French are a part of "the West" but *on their own terms*. While agreeing with the United States on Afghanistan and SS-20s, they clearly do not agree with regard to El Salvador, South Africa, and the Third World in general. The case the French seem to be making is that defense has been uncoupled from those policies that are specific to the United States and are not in the obvious interests of the other allies. Unless the U.S. learns this lesson, we may soon see a neo-Gaullist Europe that is increasingly independent of both superpowers. This would not be a bad achievement for the most conservative U.S. administration since Coolidge.

P.S. *December 5:* President Reagan's long awaited "first" major foreign policy speech was typical for this Administration: excellent in delivery and style, high on sincerity, and devoid of substantial new proposals. It presented proposals that were assured a rejection by the Soviets, while playing to the gallery—the public in the United States and Western Europe. What was new, and it is no small thing, were two points, one explicit, the other implicit. Reagan explicitly recognized that a major change in tone is essential if the Europeans are to take the Administration's commitment to negotiate any arms limitations agreements with the Soviets seriously; the implicit point was that the deployment of new theater nuclear forces by the U.S. is not essential either to deterrence or to the basic balance between the two superpowers.

The proposals for a zero option, as interpreted

A Choice of Lice

The following paragraph on U.S. foreign policy under Reagan was inserted by Lane Kirkland, head of the AFL-CIO, into his speech at the November 1981 AFL-CIO convention:

- On the vital issue of human rights, they have sought to pose a fine choice between lice who are totalitarian and lice who are authoritarian. We reject such a choice, and we call instead for a freedom of association everywhere as the keystone of a genuine human rights policy. ▣
-

by the Administration, are obviously unacceptable to the Soviets, since they leave in place both the French and the British nukes, a major edge that NATO has in battlefield nuclear weapons, and the U.S. nuclear arsenal stationed on submarines and airplanes within the European theater. I agree with McGeorge Bundy's statement (*New York Times*, Nov. 22) that, in his decidedly non-dovish view, no defense need is served by the proposed deployment of new U.S. missiles in Western Europe. There was always an asymmetry in so-called theater weapons, which could hit

Western Europe or the Soviet Union but not the United States. Thus a beefing-up of missiles in Europe increases the number of weapons that can reach one superpower without an equivalent balance. On the other hand, Reagan's speech does show that the increasing unhappiness of the West Europeans is now being noticed in Washington. And so, willy-nilly, the U.S. may be forced to start negotiating arms reductions seriously. That would be no small step forward in an otherwise bleak prospect of an increased armament race between the two superpowers. □

Lewis Coser

Reagan and the Welfare State

— Thoughts out of Season

Neither Eisenhower nor Nixon nor Ford tried to tamper with the welfare state initiated by Roosevelt. In fact, all of them extended it to a significant extent. Now, almost 50 years after its inception, the growth of the welfare state has been arrested, and the Reagan administration makes major attempts to dismantle significant parts of it. What accounts for this change?

Paradoxically, it is largely its past successes that account for the welfare state's present difficulties. Its major achievement consisted of the integration of the stable working class and the lower-middle class into American society. This was especially true for the various white ethnic groups that constitute the majority of these class strata. They have moved from marginal locations into the center of society and are no longer viewed, nor do they view themselves, as uneasy aliens in a world they never made. They have gained self-respect through such legislative enactments as Social Security, unemployment insurance, and Medicare. They have achieved home ownership with tax-deductible mortgage rates, and they own the standard middle-class household appliances, TV sets and automobiles, even though they may still feel many insecurities and deprivations.

These strata may not be bourgeoisified, they may still adhere to some working-class styles, but they have nevertheless come to be much less distinguishable from other strata in the society than they were, say, 50 years ago. These stable working-class strata, as well as their brothers and sisters in the lower-middle class, work mainly in primary and organized sectors of the labor market, in the monopolistic or oligopolistic sectors of industry, as well as in local or federal government services.

These beneficiaries of the welfare state, and especially their children, now take that state for granted, much as they do their household furniture. It is a routinized part of their ordinary social environment. The welfare state is no longer something aspired to, hoped for, striven for. In its familiar forms at least, it therefore can no longer evoke much devotion, enthusiasm, or commitment, though attempts to dismantle its benefits would encounter strong resistance.

Ever since the Kennedy-Johnson years and the war against poverty, attempts were made to extend welfare benefits to the lowest strata of society, those that had previously been largely neglected by the welfare state. New welfare benefits were to be made available to what the Victorians used to call the "undeserving poor" and to marginal and irregular workers in the secondary labor market. These strata consisted largely of

For a discussion from varying points of view touching the issues raised in this comment, please turn to page 103.

blacks, Hispanic and female workers, rather than of the traditional white ethnic males.

At first the older, stable working class looked upon such efforts with some indifference. But later, as tax bills mounted, these extensions of welfare benefits began to encounter increasing hostility and resentment. Why should those who work hard pay for those who are largely idle? Why should workers pay for drones? This led to a fairly rapid erosion of a sense of communal solidarity, as witness Proposition 13 in California and the large working- and lower-middle-class vote for Reagan.

Another source of support of Reagan rhetoric is an increasing acceptance by the working class of the antibureaucratic and antiregulation mood, which was previously largely limited to middle-class and upper strata. Upper- and working-class strata, which in the past had lived in very different ideological climates and had not shared a common mental set, were now motivated, at least in part, to share a common ideological stance.

In the past, the working class and the lower-middle class were largely reared in institutional settings that stressed the primacy of collective goals over individualistic achievements. The Catholic Church, at least since the end of the last century, accentuated a reform-oriented collective message that stressed the need for greater social justice and some egalitarianism. The ethnic mutual-aid and fraternal associations had similar goals. The trade unions also were concerned with a more egalitarian spread of social benefits even as they stressed individual betterment. But today ethnic associations, with the exception of those whose membership was replenished by post-World War II immigrants, have largely decayed. The Church has lost much of its social impact, and many unions have become instrumentalities for individual rather than communal interests, at least more so than before. (Discounts on the purchase of household goods for union members or cheap life insurance illustrate this.)

To the extent that working-class and lower-middle-class strata have succeeded because of the welfare state in moving nearer to the core sector of society, they have escaped the influence of collectively oriented institutions of their fathers and mothers.

The Puritan, Emersonian, Social Darwinist stance, which historically has been so prominent in the American mind but was previously upheld largely by a WASP minority, has now infiltrated, although in modified form, the stable working-class and lower-middle-class ethnics who were the main beneficiaries of the welfare state. The stress on reliance, on individual effort, which had begun

to sound quaint at the height of the welfare state, has regained an astonishing revitalization under Reagan. The sociological underpinning of this revitalization, I would suggest, is largely to be found in the integration of the working and lower-middle class in the core sector of American society and culture. When, as suggested above, many people join unions for private rather than collective benefits and when in the churches bingo has become as important as holy communion, then the Puritan, Emersonian, Social Darwinist strain in American culture receives powerful support from strata largely untouched by it in the past.

THE KENNEDY-JOHNSON WAR ON POVERTY was in part sparked by powerful idealistic motives, but it was also partly a reaction to the social unrest and riots in many American cities in the '60s. Hence it must also be seen as an attempt to contain the spread of such unrest, as a means of social control.

But such fears of unrest have receded in the last decade and seem not to be shared by the members of the Reagan administration. The means of controlling riots have been perfected, if that is the word, in the last decade. This is reflected in the size of municipal police forces. In 1955, American cities employed 1.9 police officers per 1,000 population. This figure has grown to 2.3 by 1965, and 2.5 by 1975. In addition, and perhaps even more important, technical equipment to contain riots has become vastly more sophisticated and is now in abundant supply. This makes it understandable that the fear of riots, despite the events of last summer in the United Kingdom, seem not to be strong in the Reagan administration.

In addition, while blacks were led by strong and determined leadership in the '60s, such leadership is no longer present. A significant black middle-class stratum has come to the fore, but a good many of its members have largely lost contact with, and interest in, the black ghetto masses. They, too, have largely been conquered by the self-help and individualistic success ethic. Similarly the college young, who produced a number of imaginative leaders in the civil-rights, antiwar, and campus battles of the '60s, have lost this leadership through cooptation. Now largely without collective vision, they have left the public arena in favor of privatized pleasures and individual, largely narcissistic goals. Finally, large portions of the labor movement have become almost totally routinized and bureaucratized, an interest group among many others. Not only do large sections of the labor movement lack idealism; labor now also is not very rich in ideas. In addition, it has been forced to make concessions, even when it comes to

wage rates through givebacks in the endangered sectors of the economy, such as the automobile industry, out of fear of even higher rates of unemployment. Hence Reagan's is the first Administration in almost 50 years to conclude that it can ignore the labor movement almost entirely.

The upshot of what I have set down so far amounts to this: The Reagan administration, banking on the new-found individualism of stable working-class and lower-middle-class strata, counts on an ideological consensus that depends on maintaining those welfare benefits that have helped integrate these strata, while it is prepared to throw overboard efforts since the Kennedy-Johnson years to extend welfare benefits to the underclass of "undeserving poor," mainly women, blacks, Hispanics. When it attempted to cut Social Security benefits it was quickly reminded by Congress that this was utterly unacceptable to its working- and middle-class constituencies. But such programs as Aid to Dependent Children, Food Stamp programs, School Lunches have suf-

fered severe cuts, and will suffer more in the future. I doubt that Medicare will be significantly reduced in the future, but am fairly certain that Medicaid benefits will be cut drastically. Tax benefits for homeowners will be largely maintained, but outlays for public housing and public transportation will dry up. Women, Hispanics, and blacks in the secondary labor market will receive even less protection than they now have, but wage levels in the primary labor market, especially if a weakened labor movement is willing to make concessions, will continue to enjoy some government support.

I NOW WISH TO SKETCH another set of circumstances that is not unrelated to what has been said above and has also contributed to the present decline of the welfare state. I refer to the increasing fragmentation of the American body politic. With the growth of the welfare state has also come the proliferation of a variety of interest groups, all intent upon maximizing their own spe-

The Mighty and the Obscene

When 33 Haitians, whose frail craft had capsized, drowned and were washed ashore on Florida beaches last November while 34 others managed to swim ashore, what do you suppose agitated some government officials, apart from their declared policy of preventing any "illegal" Haitians from landing in the U.S.? Had they been starving or had they eaten before drowning! (There have been ghastly accounts of ship captains killing their Haitian passengers, hacking them up, and tossing the remains overboard. But that's another abomination.) Imagine, though, had they eaten? As though a square meal, suggesting that they had been ferried part of the way in a larger ship, were a crime to be ferreted out by gotcha forensic autopsies. If you're going to drown, do it on any empty stomach!

I do not want to pretend that the "illegals" who flee hunger or terror in "Little Doc's" junior version of "Papa Doc's" sadism are not a problem. The same goes for Vietnamese in leaky boats, Cubans, Mexicans sneaking across the border, other Latin Americans who come in other ways. Our government declares it will only be (partly) receptive to "politicals," privation presumably not being a "political" issue. And then, our government chooses to sort the

countries into "good" countries (no escape), and "bad" countries (from which limited escape will sometimes be tolerated).

All of these people have a right—a human, moral right—to survive and be welcomed. With jobs threatened here, and an Administration planning to feed our own poor at an abysmal level, it is indeed a serious problem. No one expects the charming arm-twister to come up with solutions. As for the Murray Weidenbaums and Ed Meeses, and other presidential advisers who supposedly pad the charm with brains, there isn't an ounce of compassion in all of them to inflate their weight. This, then, does indeed become a serious matter to be addressed by unionists, economists, politicians who haven't lost all sense of decency—well, all of us who retain some hope for the human condition.

We know where the president stands: at a meeting of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (according to the *New York Times*), he informed his listeners that "Men are basically good, but prone to evil, and some men are very prone to evil." True, all too true. But a cosmetic smile, however broad, does not elevate a cliché to wisdom, nor does it camouflage stupidity.

Meantime, those autopsies. How dare those *misérables* have eaten! Most of their bodies have now been shipped back to Haiti. The obscenity remains—in both places, Haiti and the United States.

EMANUEL GELTMAN □

cial goals. As public outlays increased, so did groups of claimants for public benefits. The age of what Theodore Lowi has called "interest-group liberalism" had set it.

There were always interest groups on the American political scene, and that was surely a major sign of democracy. Big Capital, Small Capital, Big Labor were always represented in the halls of Congress, and they influenced the parallelogram of political forces in the struggle for power in America. But these older interest groups now have been joined by a multitude of others, from regional groups—the Sunbelt, the New West—to blacks, Hispanics, and older ethnic groupings, to women, to gays, to a variety of moral-issue groupings on the right and the left, from Moral Majorities to Right of Choice advocates, just to mention a few. As a result, the major American parties have found it more and more impossible to serve the brokerage and socially aggregative functions they have served in the past. They can no longer balance interests, and thus have lost their primary role as power brokers and adjusters. I yield to no one in my appreciation of the vital role of group conflicts in democratic societies. But they can be beneficial only if they take place against a background of some overall consensus.

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION now discovers this fact to its dismay, and the extraordinary incoherence of its policies seems largely to stem from this state of affairs. Who would have thought in the early exhilaration of the Reaganite victory that even Wall Street would dissent from the Reagan consensus? Reagan gave up the mobile MX missile idea, or so it would seem, not because of military or technical considerations but because his Western allies vetoed the project. If Reagan's economic policies are so contradictory, amounting, as John Kenneth Galbraith recently remarked, to attempts to ascend and descend from a mountain at the same time, this is not primarily because of the deficient economic knowledge among his advisers but because of the contradictory pushes and pulls among the interest groups that helped elect him. He wishes for a balanced budget but helps unbalance it further because of the need to support farm prices vital to his Southern and Midwestern supporters. The military-industrial complex pushes for huge increases in the military budget, while supply siders push for a reduction in the taxes of the rich. As a result, interest rates remain astronomical—to the dismay of such traditional Republican constituencies as the construction industry and small business. Older industries scream for protection and subsi-

dies, while newer high-technology sectors have no desire to shore up obsolete sectors. And so it goes.

We witness now an acceleration of the scramble for group and individual advantages by various interests, all intent upon maximizing their chances. As a result, not only the Reagan policies but the whole social fabric seems slowly to unravel, and drift defies any chance of mastery.

Even if we are not going to experience a serious depression—which seems at least a possibility—various battle royals over such moral issues as abortion, women's rights, busing, and the support of religious instruction in the schools are likely to lead to clashes that cannot easily be managed by the old methods of party brokerage and adjustment, and threaten to undermine the consensual basis of society. These clashes will not only come between Reaganites and anti-Reaganites, but within the Reagan camp itself.

If riots should break out next summer, Ed Meese and the Law-and-Order types of the Reagan administration might well attempt to press for draconian measures and significant inroads on civil rights and civil liberties. If not, the Administration will continue its present drift into a policy of incoherence.

All this might not be so perturbing if the anti-Reagan camp did not seem as rudderless as its adversaries. Nobody on the liberal left has any plan on how to counter the Reagan thrust; in fact, many Democratic congressmen seem to think that the best policy at present is to out-Reagan the Reaganites. We live in idealless times. There is little vision on the left, largely because it too has been captured by interest-group liberalism. There is not much support as yet for a Durkheimian vision of the need for rebuilding social solidarity on a new basis. Unless such a new collective ideology is worked out in the next few years, the outlook is bleak. How long can the social fabric unravel before it tears altogether, or before a new corporatist statism takes command? Some friends who read these notes before publication felt I had neglected more hopeful signs, thus creating an unnecessary apocalyptic cast. Perhaps they are right: I would love nothing better than to be contradicted by the events.

PS: David Stockman, whose doleful and cynical reflections in the December *Atlantic* were published after the above was written, sums it all up: "The power of these [fat-cat] client groups turned out to be stronger than I realized. The client groups know how to make themselves heard. The problem is, unorganized groups can't play this game." □

Gabriel Zaid

Enemy Colleagues

A Reading of the Salvadoran Tragedy

We print this remarkable article—perhaps the most comprehensive portrait yet drawn of the inner workings of Salvadoran politics—as part of a group commissioned by the Mexican monthly Vuelta, edited by Octavio Paz, and the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, the publisher of Dissent. The articles are scheduled to appear as a booklet in the near future.

Gabriel Zaid is a distinguished Mexican writer and social critic. His article was written several months ago and therefore does not take up more recent developments. In recent weeks ominous statements have come from Secretary Haig about the possibility of widening the war in El Salvador, intervening militarily, etc. These statements make all the more cogent Mr. Zaid's conclusion warning against such policies.

Since we know this article is likely to arouse strong feelings, we declare ourselves ready to print any serious, documented refutation that may be submitted. — EDS.

I. Changing Constellations of Friends/Enemies

Who was the presidential candidate of the Salvadoran Communist party (PCS) in 1972? None other than the current president: José Napoleón Duarte. Through the Nationalist Democratic Union, the (outlawed) PCS, along with the Democratic Christian party and the National Revolutionary Movement, backed a leftist coalition—the National Opposition Union—which lost the elections due to fraud, after which Duarte and the commander of the presidential guards staged a short-lived coup.¹

And who was Duarte's partner, the vice-presidential candidate? None other than his current enemy: Guillermo Manuel Ungo, now president of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR).²

What post did Ungo hold one year before presiding over this front against the junta? A member of the junta.³

Ungo replaced Enrique Alvarez Córdoba,

assassinated on November 27, 1980, while head of the FDR. What post did Alvarez hold until January of that same year? Minister of agriculture in the junta.⁴ As minister of agriculture, Alvarez took part in the agrarian reform decreed by the junta; as president of the FDR he took part in criticism of these same reforms. What background did Alvarez bring to these reforms? He was no less than a plantation owner, one of the Alvarez clan (of the "14 families"), and had taken part in a previous agrarian reform: in 1972 he was minister of agriculture under Colonel Arturo Armando Molina, none other than the official candidate who stole the elections from Duarte and Ungo. In other words: Ungo collects the mail of his enemy of 1972, Alvarez is assassinated by his allies of a few months earlier, and the Democratic Revolutionary Front was headed, until recently, by a member of the "14 families."⁵

To which class does the new president of the FDR belong? "Don Guillermo Ungo comes from the educated layer of Salvadoran society, the middle or bourgeois strata, which have become aware of the need to transform the oligarchic scheme into a social democratic order."⁶

Alvarez was an engineer, like Duarte; Ungo is a lawyer. One might see them as university-trained progressives sitting across from illiterate gorillas. But is that the case? No, because when they sit down with the military, it is as university colleagues. In 1972 the outgoing president was General Fidel Sánchez Hernández, a career soldier educated abroad, who became (in a sphere heavily weighted with South American military men) president of the Inter-American Defense Council.⁷ The incoming president was Colonel Molina, son of a career soldier and a career soldier himself, who graduated from the Military College, where he returned as professor after postgraduate studies abroad.⁸ It is an indication of the professional standing of military officers from El Salvador that the

Central American Defense Council has almost always been headed by a Salvadoran.⁹ According to the writer Roque Dalton,

From the early '70s on, the officers of the Armed Forces began attending university (first in the humanities, the idea apparently being to broaden the cultural outlook of certain officers, and later in studies of law, engineering, economics, medicine, sociology, journalism, business administration, etc.). Today there are officers and other army personnel, even from the security forces (not counting members of the secret services with university educations) pursuing academic careers in every university department in El Salvador.¹⁰

From 1965 to 1973, the annual number of graduates at the University of El Salvador increased five-fold (and the number of engineers ten-fold).¹¹ The widening of this avenue of social ascent was perhaps more important for the military than for civilians. Like the clergy in other times and places, the Salvadoran army provided those not born to wealthy families with access to education.

Opposition Groups

Armed Forces of Liberation
 Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN)
 Cultural Commission of the FDR
 Democratic Christian Party (PDC)
 Democratic Nationalist Union (UDN)
 Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR)
 Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN)
 Farabundo Martí Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL)
 Foreign Press and Propaganda Commission of the FDR
 Independent Movement of Professionals and Technicians
 Movement of Military Youth
 Movement of Popular Liberation (MLP)
 National Association of Salvadoran Educators (ANDES)
 National Coordinative of the Popular Church (CONIP)
 National Democratic Union
 National Federation of Workers (FENASTRAS)
 National Opposition Union (UNO)
 National Revolutionary Movement (MNR)

Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (PRS)
 People's Revolutionary Army (ERP)
 Political Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN-FDR
 Popular Democratic Union
 Popular Leagues-28th of February (LP-28)
 Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR)
 Popular Rural Leagues (LPC)
 Popular Social-Christian Movement
 Popular University Leagues (LPU)
 Popular Worker Leagues of Secondary Students (LPOES)
 Proletarian Vanguard (VP)
 Revolutionary Campesino Movement (MRC)
 Revolutionary Coordinative of the Masses (CRM)
 Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC)
 Revolutionary Syndicated Federation (FSR)
 "Salvador Allende" University Front of Student Revolutionaries (FUERSA)
 Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS)
 Unified Front for Popular Action (FAPU)
 Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU)

The monetary reward for being a soldier is substantially smaller than the average in any other profession. Then why do so many in El Salvador choose the military career? Perhaps because, having no access to other means of socioeconomic advancement, they view the military profession as a springboard.¹²

There next appeared [says Dalton] the phenomenon of the soldier who, after gaining administrative experience to state institutions, passed on . . . to private industrial companies. Then followed the spectacle of the industrial-manager soldier, the big-businessman soldier and the multinational-stockholder soldier. . . . The political connections that army membership at the command level could offer have launched meteoric careers for top officers who today are industrial millionaires.¹³

The Diplomatic Political Commission, an alliance of the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation and the Democratic Revolutionary Front, is made up of seven members, of whom five have been university professors (two of them rectors), one a newspaper editor and another, a woman, the author of a book (translated into French).¹⁴ Of these seven, how many had been members of the junta? No less than three: Ungo, Salvador Samayoa who was minister of education, and Rubén Zamora who was minister of the presidency.¹⁵

What did the Salvadoran Communist party think of the military coup of October 15, 1979, which toppled General Carlos Humberto Romero and brought the junta to power? No less than that it was "a removal of the fascists who were in power" and that it "has initiated a process of change that will allow the country to emerge from the profound political, economic, and social crisis into which it has been plunged during 50 years of military governments."¹⁶

Suffice it to note that, on October 15, 1979, the new military government was headed by two colonels—Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez and Arnoldo Majano; that by October 18 three civilians had been added—Dr. Ungo, leader of the National Revolutionary Movement (social democratic), Dr. Román Mayorga, rector of the Central American University, and Dr. Mario Andino, manager of a North American subsidiary (Phelps Dodge); that,

meanwhile, the Christian Democratic leader Dr. José Napoleón Duarte remained in exile in Venezuela (since the 1972 coup); and that the Communists' noble words were for a military-civilian junta, not a social democratic military junta. . . .¹⁷ Salpress, the insurgent news agency, was still using this double-talk in recent days:

Romero's fall was caused in large part by the role of the Military Youth, whose most prominent member, Colonel Adolfo Arnoldo Majano, joined the civilian-military junta that replaced the toppled general, until last December, when the fascist and right-wing forces within the regime deemed Majano too liberal to remain in the government and removed him. . . . And there is no doubting the capacity of the Democratic Christian military junta to assassinate Majano.¹⁸

[In the first days of the coup, it was strange that,] contrary to what might reasonably be expected, the Christian Democrats have not joined the ruling junta, to which three civilians have been added, and the reasons for this are by no means very clear. It is said, on the one hand, that the Christian Democrats wanted to have majority representation in that body and that their proposal was rejected; while, on the other, it is claimed that they were never invited to join the junta.¹⁹

In the merry-go-round of coups, it seems, everyone speaks according to his shifting perspectives. The very same Colonel Majano, after staging the coup and then leaving the junta, declared no less than that "The position of the present ruling body is illegal. . . ." And also that "I do not view coups d'état—though I was in one myself—as proper ways of promoting a change."²⁰

What did the Peoples' Revolutionary Army, or ERP (now represented by Ungo, who heads the Diplomatic Political Commission) think of the incorporation of Ungo and the two other civilians into the junta? On October 18, 1979, it thought that

. . . the three civilians are considered traitors to the popular cause. . . .

[The following day,] at a press conference at the University of San Salvador, [the Popular Leagues-28th of February,] political arm of the ERP . . . at the offer of participation and the promises of change given by the junta . . . re-

tracted the label of traitors as applied to the civilian members, whom they now term reformists and progressives, the same as Colonel Adolfo Majano. . . .

Questioned as to whether the LP-28 would agree to join the junta, if invited, the commission stated that "we would have to study it."

This change was the target of "bitter commentary" by the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), "considered the largest organization of the masses in the country": "They have acted in a manner unheard of until now," it stated. "Their calls for insurrection were suicidal. The ERP lost at least five men, but the casualties among the civilian population were much higher. Their posture has greatly disoriented those of us fighting to democratize this country." (As for the coup itself, the BRP held that it was "engineered with the help of the United States.")

Though the LP-28 are supposedly coordinated with the "ERP and the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution, which directs them both," they announced that "the ERP is also reconsidering its attitude and we expect to learn their position this afternoon, which should agree with our own." But there was no agreement and the hard line prevailed. Days later, the LP-28 occupied the Rosario church in protest "against the newspaper reports that describe our organization as ready to support the junta."²¹ This second retraction and the call to insurrection can be understood by reading the statements of Joaquín Villalobos, commander of the ERP, five months later:

Perhaps one of the boldest steps we have taken is the insurrection of October 16, 1979, the day after the fall of General Carlos Humberto Romero's government. For 12 hours, and in some cases longer, we maintained the military occupation of various towns. . . . Why did we proceed in this manner? Because the situation was a guise of imperialism to deceive the Salvadoran people: to have united behind it would have signaled a defeat, passing, if you like, but defeat nonetheless, of a revolutionary alternative. . . . the necessary risks had to be taken, beginning with the loss of our cadres.

. . . notwithstanding the good intentions of those who joined the first ruling junta, our policy consisted of applying a line of constant pressure, so that the military sectors that held

the real power would thus be forced to assume the defense of the true scheme devised by imperialism, the oligarchy, and their allies. The combative pressure of the masses plus the revolutionary actions of a military character hastened the crisis of the first ruling junta; the democratic officials resigned, and the tactics of their enemies stood revealed to the people.²²

In other words: Villalobos did not hesitate to sacrifice cadres and ordinary citizens, to disorient "those of us fighting to democratize this country" or to provoke the army murderers, in order to get some blood flowing and make it awkward for Ungo, the Communist party, etc., to go on supporting some of the coup members. Why? Because that policy of support made the guerrillas superfluous: it cast the military coup members (not the military guerrillas) in the role of carrying out the program of change. With this alternative sidelined, the traitors now become progressives and even representatives of the guerrillas. In the same way, once out of power, Majano is viewed sympathetically and a pact is even signed with the Military Youth, under which the officers of this movement become (subordinate) allies.²³

Most remarkable of all is that, in this pact, Villalobos declares himself in agreement with the coup's program. In other words: Villalobos approves of the army members (Majano, the Military Youth) and of the opposition (Ungo, the PCS) who allied themselves in October 1979. He also gives their program his blessing. The only slight difference, to justify provoking a slaughter, is who should be in charge. As it happened, there were "attempts against some of the figures who resigned from the first Ruling Junta." What is Villalobos's opinion?

When those acts occurred, we immediately issued a declaration condemning them, to let the honest and reputable democratic forces know that the revolutionaries envision one main enemy and that we do not consider as enemies those who honestly tried to bring about a program of changes as members of the first Ruling Junta. . . . At the same time, those attempts have a political objective: to weaken the possibility of convergence between the democratic sectors and the revolutionaries.²⁴

In denying the possible accusation, Villalobos gives an interpretation that implies a similarity of methods: just as he did not hesitate to cause deaths to prevent the convergence between the democratic sectors and a part of the army, another part of the army did not hesitate to resort to assassination attempts for analogous purposes. This is how the slaughter began: *as pressure against the conciliators on both sides*. It can't help but surprise that a harsher regime (the former) should have caused fewer deaths than a reformist junta. But the coup produced a weak government, incapable of controlling the power struggles it unleashed. In these struggles, the main enemies are the hardliners on both sides: the conciliators keep changing signs (friends or enemies) according to the shifting alignments within the battle for power.

Who is Joaquín Villalobos? Besides being "Secretary General of the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution and supreme military commander of the People's Revolutionary Army,"²⁵ he is no less than "the second most important figure in the joint command of the FMLN," the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation.²⁶ This Front—through manifestos, demonstrations, meetings, drives, auctions, cultural events, donations of a day's wages, etc.—has received the generous support of diverse groups in Mexico, among others the Roque Dalton Cultural Brigade.²⁷ But it turns out that Joaquín Villalobos, also known by his code name "René Cruz," is none other than Roque Dalton's assassin!²⁸ In other words: the Roque Dalton Cultural Brigade invokes the name of the murdered poet in order to benefit his murderer.

What charges did Villalobos make in "executing" Roque Dalton? No less than that he was a CIA agent.²⁹

The People's Revolutionary Army was the target of enemy infiltration in the person of the Salvadoran Roque Dalton, who served for a time in our revolutionary organization and who was collaborating with the enemy's secret services. . . . Roque Dalton was exposed, captured, and shot by the forces of the ERP. There exist countless proofs of his traitorous activity in the inner workings of the organization.³⁰

The "executioner"—has he withdrawn the charges? No. The other leaders, fellow comrades of both Villalobos and Dalton—have they brought Villalobos to justice? No. Have they at least shunned him? No. "He is the second most important figure in the FMLN."

What was the origin of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP)? No less than Christian.³¹ It was formed in 1970 by "radicalized Christians from the petite bourgeoisie. The ERP was to split in 1974, as a result of differences that culminated with the assassination of Roque Dalton. And at that point the Armed Forces of National Resistance make their appearance."³² The two groups attempted to exterminate one another from within until "the Farabundo Martí Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL) assume the historic role of intermediaries, demanding, in the name of the revolutionary movement, the end of hostilities and mutual respect for the physical integrity and the independent political existence of both organizations."³³

The commanders of these two groups, formerly enemies, joined with others in the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) in 1980. Shortly thereafter, however, the FARN withdrew from the DRU, and almost immediately its commander, Ernesto Jovel, died amid confusing circumstances. In the wake of his death, *Pueblo Internacional*, the publication of the Unified Popular Action Front (FAPU), a member of the FDR, recalled:

In the years 1974-75, divisions deep within the ERP shook comrade Jovel; iron-willed, unwavering, he energetically fought all deviations that broke out during this critical period. His firm line of conduct earned him a "death sentence" on the part of the militarist clique who were trying to destroy the ERP. At that time comrade Jovel continued in legal practice, and it was on leaving his offices that the criminal attempt was made (from which he fortunately escaped unhurt, though he had been unarmed) on the part of the clique that had already assassinated Roque Dalton and Armando Arteaga and was viciously pursuing other combatants. This took place on May 12, 1975. Comrade Ernesto Jovel could never understand how comrades he held in esteem could have become his murderers.

But what did Jovel think, shortly before his

death, of these “comrades” with whom he had again become allied? [After his death in late September] *Proceso* printed this interview with Jovel on October 6, 1980:

Q: What is the current status of the matter of Roque Dalton’s assassination? We understand that, in the interest of unity, it had to be laid aside, though accounts of the incident keep surfacing. What position will the FARN take concerning this assassination after the triumph of the revolution?

A: For the moment, both politically and within the pursuit of unity among the revolutionary forces, it is too delicate, too complex to explain. . . . The most important thing is the unity among all revolutionaries in the effort to overthrow the dictatorship. We’ll leave it to history to investigate and to the revolutionaries as a body to judge.

Q: What are the names of the other commanders who make up the DRU?

A: Myself [Ernesto Jovel] from the FARN; comrade Marcial from the FPL; René Cruz [Joaquín Villalobos] from the ERP, and Shafick Handal, secretary general of the Communist party.

Q: It must be hard for the rest of you to be seated alongside René Cruz. . . .

A: Certainly, very hard. But the needs of our people’s struggle require it. The contradictions remain secondary.

Q: Because, as we understand it, it was he who assassinated Roque Dalton.

A: Yes, he personally was the one who assassinated comrade Roque.

There is a notable similarity between this attitude and that of the Salvadoran officer who admits that the murderers would have to be purged from the army but that “now, while we’re under attack, is not the best moment to clean house. We have to maintain unity.”³⁴

At about that time José Napoleón Duarte gave the same kind of reply to an interviewer: “Of course [the armed forces] must be purged. But it is not possible to do so while the guerrillas are shooting at you.”³⁵ And besides, what’s wrong with assassination? Jovel himself, in his interview, had considered assassination a valid and useful tool:

Q: As for executions, are many taking place in El Salvador?

A: No. Though we are making up lists of

names and exact addresses of the principal elements of the regime.

Q: The FARN published a list of Salvadoran journalists in favor of the regime. Do you really intend to execute those journalists?

A: Definitely. Though we consider it a double-edged weapon. Actually it’s more of a psychological than a destructive weapon: we’ve already gotten reports of several proregime journalists who have fled the country for fear of being executed. But those elements who do not come to the same conclusion . . . will be executed.³⁶

Here, too, there is a notable similarity with the tactics of terrorizing or

exterminating the leftist news media and communicators. The job has not been performed by the government directly but by those in charge of all the dirty work: the paramilitary organizations. . . . The presses of the Central American University, of the newspaper *El Independiente* and of *Ediciones El Pulgarcito* were seriously damaged. *La Crónica*, a liberal daily, was shut down; its closing was preceded by the exile of its editor, José Napoleón González, and by the slaying of one of its staff writers, Jaime Suárez. Also slain were the propaganda spokesmen of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, the Unified Popular Action Front, and the Nationalist Democratic Union. YSAX, the radio station of the Archbishopric, has been silenced by bomb blasts. . . . Propaganda offices of the labor unions and of popular and student organizations have been destroyed. And there are also the threats to national and foreign journalists, and the slaying of Ignacio Rodríguez, correspondent for a Mexican paper.³⁷

It was very hard for Jovel to sit down with a comrade who had murdered another, who had tried to crush the newborn Armed Forces of National Resistance and had issued orders (unsuccessfully) for his own liquidation. But he agreed to it. What finally became of Jovel, who was so accepting of political murder? A confusing death, which gave rise to ugly interpretations. It was first reported that “The commander-in-chief of the powerful Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), Ernesto Jovel, died last Saturday in this capital [San Salvador], in a traffic accident, according to the official announcement here today by the General Command of that

organization.” The announcement stated: “in an accident whose causes we are investigating.”³⁸ Almost immediately there were rumors of foul play, because two days later the same command declared that “we do not blame any other revolutionary organization.”³⁹ And later still “all biased accounts or rumors ‘aimed at undermining the unity of our organizations’ are ‘categorically’ denied.” At the same time FARN’s General Command reported that, on investigation, it had not been an automobile accident in San Salvador but rather a plane crash, in a light craft flying over the sea, in which “one of the engines failed and the other dropped off.”⁴⁰

During that same period and even in the same communiqués, differences among the guerrilla leaders came to light. In one bulletin from the FARN,⁴¹ the death of Jovel was announced, but the largest space was given to problems of internal unity (“Ernesto’s thinking and guidance draw our organization in greater unity around the struggle for power”) and with the other groups: “The DRU [Unified Revolutionary Directorate] was a historic agreement entered into by our commander Ernesto Jovel Funes, who signed an act under which the four organizations (FPL, PCS, ERP and FARN) committed themselves to initiating a process of unification. . . .” The DRU agreed that no organization was to publicly attack any of the others, since it was within the DRU, by means of dialogue and general consensus, that the correct methods for guiding the ideological struggle of positions would be decided.

. . . The FARN was surprised by a communiqué in the name of the DRU . . . without all members of the DRU having been consulted, which, by bringing an internal debate of the DRU to public light, paved the way for questions and doubts to be raised among leaders and organizations in the international field. . . . But undoubtedly those most eager to fuel the flames have been the enemies of our people, who have resorted to malignant rumors. The scurrilous story has been circulating that the FARN had disappeared, satanic rumors have been started that there has been a purge within the FARN, and it has been given out that certain leaders of the FARN have fostered the division and break-up because they are enemy agents.

Let us go back to the prologue to the interview with Jovel⁴²:

[The death of Jovel] was another blow to the Salvadoran revolutionary movement, at a time when it is facing divergences that led to the withdrawal of the FARN from the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU). Twelve days before his death and the rift between the FARN and the DRU, Ernesto Jovel granted a clandestine interview. . . .

Q: Not long ago, the four military-political groups now in El Salvador announced that they had formed a common general staff: the DRU. . . . Nevertheless, reports have surfaced alleging problems of coordination.

A: . . . Work is under way toward joining all the forces under a single command. Clearly, this involves a long process.

Q: Concerning the DRU, can it be said that officially it is the army of the Democratic Revolutionary Front?

A: You could say that at this point it is the army of the people.

Q: But not that it is the army of the Democratic Revolutionary Front?

A: Maybe yes, maybe no. But it can certainly be observed that there is a growing trust, sympathy, and support on the part of the Front toward the four armed organizations in this country.

In other words: each looks after its own business; there are problems of trust among the organisms, diminishing as time goes on. With regard to this problem, Jovel’s death was opportune: the new commander of the FARN led it back to the DRU.

The brief rupture of revolutionary unity in El Salvador has now been recognized as a tactical error and, following a long process of criticism and self-criticism at the level of the United Revolutionary Directorate (DRU), all the revolutionary organizations have been able to overcome the barriers and solidly reinforce unity, guaranteeing revolutionary triumph in El Salvador in the near future. As of last October 23, the National Resistance has rejoined the DRU and the FMLN.⁴³

Earlier, as the FARN communiqué reports,

Our general command paid respectful homage at the spot where our first commander and comrades Augusto Cotto and Anabel Ramos fell. . . . The FARN scattered flowers and dropped the organization’s flag on the site of

the oil slick, the sole vestige of the "crashed" plane.⁴⁴

Still in the same interview with Jovel, it can be seen how opinions keep changing as to who are friends and who enemies. Jovel says,

... We trust, and we feel certain, that our struggle will be joined by the soldiers and corporals, by the troops as a whole and the progressive officers, who do indeed exist within the dictatorship's army. We trust in them because they are poor people, laborers, peasants. The progressive officers come from the middle classes. . . .

Q: Why has the Junta's Colonel Adolfo Majano been mentioned as the possible head of a coup d'état fomented by the United States?

A: Excuse me, who's mentioned him?

Q: The DRU.

A: Oh yes, some time ago . . . [long silence] . . . We believe the North American imperialists work fundamentally for various alternatives to thwart the present revolutionary situation. And they're toying with that possibility. At this point, however, it can be said that the alternative they've gone for is the Junta.⁴⁵

II. Roque Dalton vs. Roque Dalton: The Unconditional Surrender

Roque Dalton "was born May 14, 1935, in San Salvador, to an upper-middle-class family. He studied with Jesuits at San José Day School (a bourgeois boys' school), which became the object of satire in several of his poems."⁴⁶ The reference is to the following poem:

A Salvadoran worker ponders the famous case of San José High

The Catholic Church, historically,
is a feudal-bourgeois institution.

We're in the period of transition
from capitalism to socialism
and the Catholic Church is running to catch up.

Marxism-Leninism is,
besides the theory of the proletarian revolution
and all that sort of thing,
the science of the History of the proletariat.

San José High is,
"ad majorem Dei gloriam,"
the great Catholic high school of the Salvadoran
bourgeoisie.

San José High
included in its sociology curriculum
several aspects of Marxism
(as a "healthful vaccine," not a
"carrier of disease").

The most backward and colonized feudal-
bourgeois
in El Salvador start screaming that San José
High is indoctrinating their sons in Commu-
nism.

There's a big stink in all the papers and on TV
the Attorney General of the Republic comes on
and then the President of the Republic after him
and they talk about the flag and the heroes of
the Republic

and about the true Christianity of the Republic
all very sweet and soothing.

In all the uproar and ballyhoo
it's hard to be completely certain,
but I keep wondering,
isn't this whole case just another sign
that the bourgeoisie is out to rob the proletariat
even of Marxism itself?⁴⁷

The bourgeois are the others, always the others. Dalton isn't bourgeois: he's "upper middle class." In contrast, the Jesuits attacked by the government are nothing but bourgeois trying to rob the proletariat even of Marxism. The feeblest thing in this feeble poem is that it tries to end with an ironic twist, without enough irony to see that the twist comes back like a boomerang: Dalton is, precisely, a bourgeois grasping at Marxism. And since he is unable to laugh at his own ironic situation, the attempted humor is flat and the actual humor unintentional. The poem's solemn voice condemns the Jesuits: your goods are stolen. The smug voice of a legitimate property-holder adds implicitly: but not mine. . . . To justify this voice, Dalton attributes it to a Salvadoran worker. But this is not the speech of a worker. It's the speech of a bourgeois who'd like to quit being one by accusing the others. The important thing is that the others never stop being bourgeois. Another poem in the series goes,

**Advice no longer needed
anywhere in the world
except El Salvador**

Never forget
that the least fascist
among the fascists
are still
fascists

Dalton began studying for a law degree at the National University of San Salvador, but quit school to devote himself to political and literary activities. He joined the Communist party while still very young. . . . He took part in the popular struggle against the tyranny of Colonel José María Lemus from 1956 to 1960, was persecuted and jailed, and just when he was about to be shot he escaped from prison . . . and traveled to his second country, Cuba, where he was an active contributor to the *Casa de las Américas*. He journeyed to Chile, Mexico, Czechoslovakia, Korea, and North Vietnam, and won numerous prizes and awards for his poetry. . . . He died on May 10, 1975, shortly before his 40th birthday and soon after joining the Salvadoran People's Revolutionary Army.⁴⁸

"He died tragically in 1975, after joining the guerrilla movement in his country."⁴⁹ 1980 marked the end of "five years since he surrendered his own life to the cause and the people of El Salvador."⁵⁰ "He showed us the path and we followed it in the highest homage that could be paid to him. Thus was born the Brigade that today bears his name."⁵¹

A terrible path: to be assassinated by a comrade-in-arms so that he could prosper and go on to declare: "It is our fate to harvest the fruit of the seed our fallen brothers have sown."⁵² Dalton did not believe that the path lay in forming cultural brigades. He was scornful where such militants were concerned: they were "second-class."

That is, we do not mean to say that a writer is good for the revolution only if he takes to the sierra or kills the Chief of Police, but we believe that a good writer is closer as a guerrilla to everything the struggle for the future stands for, the onset of hope, etc., . . . than as one who limits himself to striving, at best, to be the *critic of his society* with three meals a day on his plate.

. . . I realize that someone might come and say to me: But you always speak of the intellec-

tual as a man whose only option is to actively embrace armed combat.

[He answers his own question in the affirmative:] We're not in a seminar here on aesthetic problems but rather a discussion of revolutionary responsibilities, of the revolutionary responsibilities of the writer.⁵³

Perhaps Dalton came to feel bourgeois in Havana. He had income, security, recognition, travels abroad, connections. He had credentials: he had served in the Communist party, fighting against Lemus, suffered tortures, published books. Maybe Che's death (a year and a half earlier) had shaken him. Instead of viewing it in practical terms, as a failure, he saw it with Christian idealism, as a success more desirable than that of belonging to a triumphant court. "The thing is not to forge alibis for ourselves with our jail cells, our sweat or our scars—and this was the fear Régis Debray had on my account, watching me drink all that beer in Prague—but rather, all of us, to take a step forward."⁵⁴ It isn't enough to be an office, a classroom, a café revolutionary, to travel abroad, to rub shoulders with celebrities, to prattle elegantly: *Debray told me in Prague, when I got drunk with him: don't be a bourgeois living off your nice little revolutionary capital.*

I see now that whoever consciously and responsibly affirms Che Guevara as his ideal cannot then go on making idle talk without ending up being a bastard. That is, when we speak here of Latin American intellectuals, we're concerned with a heightened perspective: that of their responsibilities toward the giant task of Latin American Revolution. Once this basic perspective is accepted (which binds us directly or indirectly to the only viable means of taking political power in Latin America, namely armed struggle). . . .⁵⁵

Dalton wanted to be a Salvadoran Che Guevara: a writer who sacrifices the writer for the sake of the revolutionary. He left Havana for El Salvador like Che for Bolivia; at approximately the same age (mid-life, two or three years short of forty) and with other similarities besides: being university-educated, interested in writing and making politics, with underground experience, with the experience of "having arrived" (though at very

different levels); living in Havana as foreigners accepted into a second country, and not remaining to bask in it, but instead going off to make the revolution in another Latin American country, down an armed, clandestine, and backwoods path. That is: contrary to the normal preferences of Communist parties, which are for big cities, strikes, and the electoral process.

The anthropological error of Che and his followers is in not seeing that the revolutionary culture is an integral part of the culture of progress, and therefore opposed to the peasant culture. This is why Marxism catches on more readily in a "bourgeois boys' school" than among Bolivian Indians. It is easier to make university students aware of their right to grab for power than to convince the peasants to take up arms in order to cease being peasants. The true peasant guerrilla has always been conservative, defensive, on his home ground: not offensive, progressive, assaulting power. The student guerrillas go to the country in order to return to the city; to gain the experience, the credentials, the access to power that one must have in order to change things from the center and from above. For the students, guerrilla activity is the continuation of the rise to power by other means. (In support of this point, see the analysis of Eric R. Wolf,⁵⁶ concerning the Mexican, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Algerian, and Cuban revolutions.)

If the Salvadoran government had allowed Duarte and Ungo to take over in 1972, blood would not now be running so freely. The Salvadoran Communist party would have been confirmed in its strategy, and the few guerrillas would have been left without that important urban connection. Today's guerrillas are break-aways from the capital up into the mountains (not peasant insurgents); break-aways from the Communist party, the university, the Church, who around 1970 began to take up arms. Cayetano Carpio ("Marcial"), ex-seminary student, founds the FPL:

Q: You resigned from the Communist party?

A: That's right.

Q: Could you tell me why?

A: Because of the Cuban Revolution.

Q: How is that?

A: I saw clearly, I understood that the transformation in Latin America is by the path of war. The Salvadoran Communist party held that the path was politics and that only at the end, when the final blow was to be aimed, should arms be used.⁵⁷

The [Farabundo Martí] Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL) was "formed in 1970 by university students and dissident members of the Communist party,"⁵⁸ the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) by "radicalized Christians from the petite bourgeoisie."⁵⁹ Out of the ERP comes the FARN (Armed Forces of National Resistance). In other words, the three groups have the same origin: impatience, not only with regard to power, but with their own opposition comrades as well.

This impatience with talk, this glorification of guns as the continuation of debate by other means, is what kills Roque Dalton. But it is there in his own argument: like Villalobos, like Jovel, Dalton assumes the necessity of assassination.

There is not one good socialism and another bad. There is a historical, dialectical continuity, upward and positive, which displays many errors along the way. We cannot, without inspiring a useless measure of vanity that can only amount to impotence, *assume* the defeat of nazism, for example, and not *assume* the Stalin of the concentration camps. Or insist on emphasizing *the conditions that I as a lily-white intellectual attach to supporting the Cuban Revolution*. Who are we to go putting conditions on the power of the people, when this power never sent for us, never summoned us to support it! It has allowed us to support it, at any rate, and I for one feel grateful. The revolutionary's support of a revolution is, in essence, unconditional."⁶⁰

For Dalton, the errors and horrors of Stalin were supportable—unconditionally acceptable as part of something positive and upward. What he did not wish to accept but rather to violently reject was his being bourgeois. The open-mindedness of a progressive bourgeois was to be rejected as insufficient or as stealing from the proletariat. The least little thing that smacked of fascism (and what is there that hasn't smacked of fascism?) was as fascist as Hitler's crimes. A slaughter of inno-

cents carried out by Hitler is in the evil, the sinister, the negative column; a slaughter of innocents carried out by Stalin is in the good, the upwardly positive column. Killing the Chief of Police is the highest achievement for a writer who truly wants to be a revolutionary. To write social criticism, form cultural brigades, put one's pen at the service of the first-class revolutionaries, while eating three meals a day, is for poor slobs who don't dare to take up arms.

We are finally positive, at least I myself am—pardon the smugness—that our opportunity for social-revolutionary status is here at last, bright and clear, the possibility to stop being “second-class revolutionaries” as we have always been, and not always exclusively by our own fault.⁶¹

Anyone familiar with Catholic culture will recognize in this moral urgency the theology of perfection. The Church Militant, in its battle against the devil, flesh and the world, rests on a sluggish base: first the unpracticing laymen; then come the second-class revolutionaries; then the secular clergy, the congregation, the most ardent believers, and other lay militants; and finally the perfect, who have renounced all and made an unconditional surrender of their lives to a rule of militant perfection: the monastic clergy (Jesuits, and so forth).

For Dalton, the people are blind and the intellectuals one-eyed. The only whole men are men like Castro, like Che:

The capitalism that left all the exploited people blind and dispossessed took only one eye from us and set out to charm our other one with treachery and profit.⁶²

The intellectual as implanter of revolutionary consciousness in the exploited classes. . . . This burden could not be shouldered if we understand the revolutionary culture of Latin America to be simply a labor of “starry-eyed poets” and aesthetes.⁶³

Inasmuch as the Latin American revolution has emerged from a deep theoretical void, inasmuch as we are now in a time of resurgence of a new revolutionary vanguard in the countries on the continent (and I'm speaking of a *political-military* vanguard that will orchestrate the directional needs along the path of Latin American revolution, the armed struggle, and not of a *literary* vanguard). . . .

. . . the intellectuals have a broad field of labor within the overall revolutionary scheme, *above all because in Latin America there are no focal points of political-moral-doctrinal prestige, which in Cuba have been personified in Fidel Castro, Ernesto Guevara, the revolutionary leadership in general. Rather, there is a crisis of leadership that gives the elaboration of principles, lines, and norms for the revolutionary struggle the character of an extremely delicate and conflictive task, to be substantiated with an intelligence fed by the deepest knowledge of reality, in the service of a scientifically motivated policy.* . . .⁶⁴

It is fitting to note that in the theology of perfection there is no mention of power struggles, nor is any advice offered as to how to get to be pope. Such matters, it is presumed, do not exist. If someone were to say that, in profound meditation, he'd heard a call to be pope, he would be ridiculed as a bad Christian. In the same way, to point out how, in revolutionary groups, parties, and regimes, there tends to be a greater turnover at the summit than at the base, to speak of power struggles at the top, or of possible successors—such matters are all indecent. God will provide. One must surrender unconditionally, not worry about who's on top.

In Dalton's urge for the perfection Che represents, he speaks of unconditional surrender but not of who should surrender to whom. He offers no advice as to how, once called to be a perfect revolutionary, a complete intellectual, a whole man, one is in fact to arrive at the power of a Castro or a Che. And what's to be done if the young economist Joaquin Villalobos hears the same call as Dalton, feels the same radical urgency for moral superiority, the same impatience with “starry-eyed poets” and aesthetes? Who's to surrender to whom?

From the perspective of those already armed, the desire for sacrifice on the part of a writer setting out in Che's footsteps could be seen as simply the desire for power of an upstart seeking the limelight: Che's leading role. Any combatant who is not content to be simple cannon fodder is a contender in the internal struggle for power—whether by hook (distinguishing oneself, winning over the leaders, the rank and file) or by crook. And who's

right? How do you settle what's to be done (which in the final analysis is to settle who commands)? What direction do you take if there is no unified leadership (if nobody has secured power: taken charge of his comrades, like Castro)? What if there are no focal points of political-moral-doctrinal prestige like Castro or Guevara, and thus a conflicting array of principles, lines, and norms for the revolutionary struggle?

It is hardly surprising that those who renounce the force of arguments and choose the arguments of force in confronting oppression should use the same arguments in settling their differences. Roque Dalton was slain by a comrade who beat him at the use of his own arguments, in an internal power struggle. Terrible enough, neither the most thorough accord between thought and action, nor the most absolute and unconditional surrender, nor even taking to the mountains, strapping on arms and offering himself up to kill the Chief of Police saved Dalton from the final spit in the face at his death, accused by his comrades as a bourgeois. Just as if he'd remained a writer signing manifestos and eating three meals a day.

In the discourse of reason, the winner is the one with the reason. In the discourse of guns, the winner's the one with the gun.

III. Dalton and the FARN: A Victim of Guerrilla Militarism

On March 5-14, 1980, Manlio Tirado published in *Excelsior* a series of articles, testimonies, and documents concerning the situation in El Salvador. The series includes two documents quoted in their entirety, which seem to be official statements from the other two guerrilla groups on the death of Dalton and the conduct of the ERP. The following paragraphs are from reports by the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN).⁶⁵

IT IS EVIDENT that during this whole process of intense ideological struggle at the level of the ERP's National Command, the militarist elements, which are weak in matters of ideology and

politics, start plotting various maneuvers by which they might obstruct or take over the mechanisms of ideological struggle.

Knowing that the military conception itself was in question, they realize that their first task is to present as soon as possible a document on the military conception, so that it can be discussed and approved by the organization's membership. . . . They take a series of hasty measures in connection with "preparing the conditions for insurrection" and set about militarizing [the ERP] as much as they can.

The militarists now undermine the political cadres, starting smear campaigns against those leaders who do not share their ideas. They show a police mentality in "recruiting" members of the cadre whom they entrust with tasks of "political vigilance" against their own comrades and cell leaders. They maintain and create networks of veritable "eyes and ears" in the organization who inform them as to the opinions expressed in the ideological struggle. At the same time they launch an intense campaign against "internal revisionism"—identifying that deviation with the political positions that seek closer contact with the masses and the combination of all forms of struggle useful to the revolutionary process.

This process of unrevolutionary maneuvers and stratagems soon leads them to define themselves as a clique that constitutes a double power: safely ensconced in the "Military Staff" of the ERP, it now also begins functioning from there parallel to the National Command.

At the level of the [National] Command, the ideological struggle has been arrested by the flat refusal of the militarist clique to allow the Command . . . to frame a document responsibly detailing the two conceptions, so as to provide the basis for an ideological struggle and to orient the rank and file for such a discussion. Yet, in spite of this, documents are drafted whose discussion arouses the rank and file, and this forces the clique ever deeper into the gutter of slander and dishonesty. . . .

The role of "mastermind and conceptual coordinator" was assumed to belong to comrade Roque Dalton, in whom the militarists thought to find their "greatest adversary"—the only one "capable," because of his theoretical skills, of being the source and mainstay of conception. A serious misjudgment on the part of the militarist clique. Isolated as its members were from the political development of broad sectors of the organization, they were unable to comprehend that while comrade Roque Dalton shared that conception, he had not,

in his coordination of development and defense, played the fundamental role that they, in their deviationist minds, wished to assign him.

With the preconceived idea of “getting rid” (politically, for the moment) of comrade Roque Dalton as a step toward advancing in their positions, they increase their campaign of provocative acts aimed at eliminating him from the discussions and, in passing, at setting in motion a further scheme: the implication in the “frame-up” of certain members of the National Command, who would then have to consider Dalton as against the Military Staff of the ERP. . . .

The clique pushes for the short-term and cowardly insurrectionist thesis, attempting to center the ideological struggle around accepting or rejecting this thesis, flatly denying the need for discussion at the level of strategic conception, arguing that such a course exhibits intellectualized tendencies that deviate from concrete action and, in passing, using the acceptance or rejection of their insurrectionist theses as a thermometer to “gauge” the degree of decision or vacillation among the rank and file. . . .

April 13, 1980: A situation is provoked in which comrade “Pancho” is forced into behavior that the clique considers “military rebellion,” and he is seized immediately in a crude and violent manner. Two hours later, comrade Roque Dalton is seized, accused of having incited Pancho to his rebellious stance. Arrest is also decreed for those members of the National Command who happened to be present at the time of the seizures, and in less than 24 hours a court-martial is called against the comrades.

Moments before convening the court-martial, which is to be run by the clique—which has instigated the provocation and arrests and whose members are about to enact the farce of setting themselves up as the judges—the other members of the National Command call an emergency session in hopes of heading off the irrational events now in progress. At this meeting one of the members of the clique designates himself “political chief of the organization,” denies the authority of the fully seated National Command to prevent the court-martial, denies the National Command its right to appeal to the cadres in defense of the comrades, and raises direct threats of death against those members of the National Command who might attempt in any way to oppose the will of the Military Staff.

April 14: The “court-martial” takes place, and members of the militarist clique accuse Roque

Dalton as instigator of Pancho’s “rebellious” conduct and of plotting against the Military Staff, demanding his immediate execution. Dalton’s defense is taken up by a member of the National Command, who succeeds in getting the Military Staff, constituted as self-appointed tribunal, to agree to hand down detention sentences against the accused comrades.

We thought then, in all good faith, that the gravest danger had passed and that the clique would respect its own agreements with regard to the sentenced comrades. . . . However, the clique now felt it could not allow any such process its ultimate conclusion without emerging defeated.

April 16: A bulletin is issued by the Military Staff reporting the arrests, the court-martial, and the detention sentences handed out against the comrades. On the same day, one sector of the organization denounces the maneuvers of one Military Staff member who has personally attempted to defy the National Command and to assume political leadership of the sector, requesting that he be dismissed for his actions.

April 17: The final meeting of the National Command of the old ERP is held, in which the clique seizes political power, dissolving the [National] Command organism on the pretext that certain of its members formed part of a right-wing opportunist faction supposedly headed by Roque Dalton, and arguing that the clique and its cadres constitute the “political majority” within the organization. They declare the ideological struggle as ended, announcing the triumph of their position and launching a new subjugation of those that oppose them. . . . They try to crush, under threats of expulsion, exile, and execution, all opposition and divergence from the line of the “political majority.”

April 20: In an effort to preserve the organic unity of the ERP, those sectors among us that [did eventually split off and] now make up the [Armed Forces of the] National Resistance [FARN] send out a call to all cadres of the organization to hold a congress to determine once and for all the line and the strategic conception. This document is not even brought to the rank and file’s attention.

The clique now embarks on a new phase of maneuvers: they reveal internally [to the ERP’s membership] the identity of comrade Roque Dalton (who was known in the organization as Julio Delfos Marín), declaring him a right-wing revisionist and pro-Cuban agent who had infiltrated the ERP. Failing to alarm the rank and file with

this accusation, they launch their cowardly accusation in the following days that he is a CIA agent, and they prompt the organization to declare a "military emergency." The [ERP's] army now assumes total control of the organization through its military staff so as to save the party; and they declare that under these conditions it is not possible to take up the ideological struggle, much less hold an extraordinary session such as the congress—until the [party's] army can guarantee the total purging of the infiltration effected, according to them, by comrade Roque Dalton.

May 1: It is under these circumstances that the leaders of what then becomes and now makes up the National Resistance [FARN], in full consultation with our cadres, hold an emergency meeting. The participants of that meeting agree on organizational separation from the militarist clique, which, having violated all Leninist principles, lacks the moral and revolutionary viability to continue in positions of leadership within our organization. The clique, however, keeps this declaration of separation secret from the cadres, and thus assumes responsibility for all the subsequent events.

May 8: The blind and irrational response of the militarist clique entrenched in the ERP was to try to assassinate the members of the new National Resistance [FARN] without the slightest warning. On this date, three criminal assaults are mounted, all of which, despite the ferocity with which they were carried out, end in failure, frustrating their criminal designs against members of the National Resistance.

May 9: Hastily and in order to justify their criminal actions of the previous day, they draft a communiqué, signed by the Military Staff, in which they condemn to death or exile all those they consider political leaders of the National Resistance [FARN].

May 10: Furious and impotent after the failure of the assassinations they had plotted against members of the National Resistance, the members of the clique turn their anger against the detained comrades and ruthlessly murder Pancho and Roque Dalton.

May 16: In an act of desperation and political blindness, which has earned them the total repudiation of the national and international revolutionary conscience and the condemnation of history, they sink forever into the abyss of ignominy by publicly declaring themselves responsible for the assassination of Roque Dalton, whose memory they attempt to besmear.

IV. Dalton vs. the FLP: A Petit Bourgeois Not Worth the Killing

In reading the following paragraphs,⁶⁶ it must be borne in mind that the [Farabundi Martí] Forces of Popular Liberation (FLP) acted as mediators to end the mortal combat between the ERP and the FARN. Hence they condemn the assassination but try to downplay its significance. In effect, they accuse the victim of having been murdered and leaving a problem to the living. There are passages that sound as if the ERP is speaking, more than the FLP, but there is no indication that this is actually so.

SOME OF THE PECULIAR FACTS surrounding Dalton were: his apprehension and interrogation by CIA agents and his subsequent and remarkable escape from the Cojutepeque prison; his disappearance for approximately ten days while on secret organization business; his possible links to the disappearance of comrade Mauricio in April 1974, who was in charge of counterespionage for the organization; and the fact that, according to statements by Sebastián Urquilla, Dalton "confessed" to him that he had been involved in the defection of his political superior (Lucrecio) in September 1974.

We do not point to these incidents as proofs, only as the framework that made it possible, by way of a scheme devised personally by Sebastián Urquilla, to support the charge that Dalton was a CIA agent. Naturally, they do not constitute any proof beyond establishing a series of puzzling incidents; each might well have its own explanation but together they warrant investigation. . . .

Dalton's execution touched off a furious campaign on the part of the petit-bourgeois "intelligentsia," which gradually settled into an effort to make a political banner of Dalton, to which rallied the most obscure and contemptible factions among the Latin American revolutionaries. These people—turning out their pronouncements, their essays and poems, from the safety of their parasitic exiles, from the banality of their existentialist lives or in academic positions—have come to see in Dalton something more than the simple opportunity of justifying themselves as petit-bourgeois intellectuals who consider themselves fathers and mothers of the leftist revolution. They have turned Dalton into a "revolutionary" of "great talents," ignoring the truth as to his role in the Salvadoran revolutionary movement and exalting his ephemeral militancy. Thus they hope to establish them-

selves as a sector under the banner of Dalton, poet and writer, this being [to them] what his death makes important, and making a hero of him, while the truth is that he was both victim and agent of his own death.

In our country many humble men and women of the people have died setting valiant and heroic examples of combat, ideological solidarity, and revolutionary conviction. . . . But they weren't poets or writers, nor did they spend 10 years playing revolutionary tourist, serving among the bureaucracies of international revisionism, nor did they attend congresses and conventions to show off their leftist rhetorical accomplishments. Some of our comrades killed in heroic battles couldn't even read or write. Many have fallen in our land who were worth a hundred times more than Dalton; only poet and writer Dalton lived his life where publicity and the cult of personality were what counted, and now that he's dead everyone is rushing to condemn the "assassins" of such a famous poet, writer, good guy, and close friend.

DALTON'S EXECUTION was a political ideological error, no petit-bourgeois adventurer deserves death for that fact alone. We admit this grave error because self-criticism is the ideological motor by which we advance. . . .

1. Dalton arrived in the country in December 1973, after spending 11 years abroad, where he pursued the life of a poet and writer in Cuba, Czechoslovakia, and other countries, moving among the revisionist bureaucracies and circles of the parasitic leftist, petit-bourgeois intelligentsia. He was not a founding member of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) nor did he devote himself and his whole life to the work of the People's Revolutionary Army. He was executed in May 1975.

2. Dalton did not come of his own free will, he came as a result of negotiations that were never made entirely clear (at least to the current members and leadership of the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution—PRS—and the People's Revolutionary Army—ERP). These negotiations were entered into between Sebastián Urquilla and the Cuban Communist party. The intention was apparently to secure Cuba's international support by allowing Dalton to join the organization.

This support came into competition with that of the other leftist organizations in the country. It was the pragmatism of Sebastián Urquilla backed by the [ERP's] former National Command, which accepted these arguments that brought about the enlistment of Roque Dalton.

3. Dalton was not a military chief in the organization and he took part in only one military action as combatant (the capture of Radio YSR in March 1974).

4. Dalton's political participation during this period has little significance . . . although certain tasks did have some political value, those related to his capacity as writer and historian, for example, *Realidad Nacional, Dictadura Fascista* ("National Reality, Fascist Dictatorship"). His work *Ejército nacional y contrarrevolucion en El Salvador* ("National Army and Counterrevolution in El Salvador") is also in a vein similar to the above. It, too, ignores the economic-political contradictions of Salvadoran society and subjects everything to an overemphasis on the specific war of Yankee imperialism. Several other unpublished works were military tracts exhibiting his militarist and folkish tendencies concerning the formation of guerrilla columns, etc.

5. Dalton's career in the organization was that of a cadre member handicapped by excessive liberalism and indiscipline, the product of his low ideological character and of his pragmatic bourgeois tendencies. He never subjected his conduct to a politics of principles . . . but rather kept temporizing, accepting whatever was convenient, avoiding discussion, and maintaining a conspiratorial stance (encouraging Pancho's insubordination, for example) in order to strengthen his own hand in the struggle for hegemony in the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP). . . .

V. Leaders in Conflict

One will notice that none of these allegations and interpretations even remotely resemble peasant allegations. The language is academic, opaque, tortured. Those on the bottom are the subject, not the participants, in these discussions. The peasants die silently, flee silently. Those who talk, those with the microphone, are on top: university colleagues from the faculties of engineering, law, military science, theology, economics, who have some claim to authority, or have had it, or aspire to it: officers in the army or the guerrilla movement, the junta or the opposition, the parties, the Church, the university, the press, businesses. Those on top cannot agree about how to treat those on the bottom: this is the conflict that makes Salvadoran blood run.

Among the prisoners in the Santa Tecla penitentiary can be found "Morales Carbonell (a son of the current junta member Morales Ehrlich) who, for having aligned himself on the side of the people's forces, for his integrity and family connections, poses a serious problem for the dictatorship."⁶⁷ Such striking cases—under what circumstances do they usually occur? In a student movement, in an urban guerrilla movement; not in a peasant uprising. In Mexico, no imprisoned Zapatista had a "V.I.P." or official for a father. But then again, the young Morales is not just any prisoner.

The political prisoners in Santa Tecla publish their own newspaper. In recent days they have finished compiling a book of all the poems written in that jail. Their activities are aimed at the "common" prisoners as well. They join in assemblies with them and have formed a cooperative to administer the funds from the sale of handicrafts. . . . Three military squads operate inside: one commanded by Recinos, another by Morales Carbonell.⁶⁸

In other words, *the ruling class in power is mirrored in the opposition*. Morales Carbonell goes right on commanding, administering, collecting, fashioning theories, poems, declarations. Or, as Dalton would say: *the bourgeoisie assures its own continuity, appropriating even Marxism*. The Morales, the Alvarizes, the Daltons change sides but not places: they stay on top. Those on the bottom stay on the bottom. The difference between son and father (who goes about the country handing out land to the peasants, as Alvarez's successor⁶⁹) is a difference of sides. The father is willing to deal with the military in order to do what he thinks must be done. The son gets impatient: he thinks it is better to turn militant, to overthrow the others and impose what he thinks must be done.

(Antonio Morales Ehrlich was the vice-presidential candidate for the National Opposition Union—UNO—against the official party, when they faced each other again in the 1977 elections. The presidential candidate for the UNO was "the retired military colonel Ernesto Claramount, a professional army man who belonged to no party and had not been active in politics. . . . The UNO, in offering a

military candidate, was attempting to 'mend fences with the armed forces,' . . . win over the military reformists, and grant asylum to the rightists." Their opponent was General Carlos Humberto Romero. When the new fraud ensued, there followed killings, a state of siege, and the exile of Claramount and Morales Ehrlich.⁷⁰)

But who is to assure the young Morales that he will get to be a Castro, and not a Majano (or worse, a Roque Dalton), who came into a share of power and was unable to impose what he believed? Castro had an extraordinary talent for arriving at power ahead of his comrades and then was lucky enough not to be saddled with them: Camilo Cienfuegos died opportunely, Che Guevara went away opportunely, Huber Matos committed an opportune error that made it possible to jail him, and a word to Carlos Rafael Rodríguez reminding him how he'd supported Batista was enough to ensure that Castro and not Rodríguez emerged as the party's top leader. As it turned out, the Cuban with the best claims to head the army happened opportunely to be one of the family.

In Cuba, Castro challenged Batista under the permissive conditions of the North American big stick. In Nicaragua, an alliance of leaders challenged Somoza under similar conditions. In El Salvador, there is no Castro and no Somoza, nor are conditions the same. Castro consolidated his power after ousting Batista. In Nicaragua, Somoza disappeared and what follows is a problematic joint rule. In El Salvador, there is not even this joint rule: the constellations of allies and enemies have been changing constantly since October 15, 1979, and not only among those in power or only in the opposition camp, but crossing from opposition to power and from power to opposition. Another difference: Castro carried out a summary elimination of enemies when he came to power; the Nicaraguans, with a generosity that deserves to go down in history (and that, let us hope, will shape their revolution as a change not of power brokers but of relations between men), did not. In the case of El Salvador, the precedents of 1932, the current slaughter and shifting makeup of enemy constellations raise the fear of endless

slaughter between two thousand-headed hydras.

Remarks by the Sandinista commander Humberto Ortega:

We saw that it was necessary to bring these things together at the same time and in the same strategic space: the insurrection of the masses on a national level, the offensive by the front's military forces, and the nationwide strike in which the business community took part or that at any rate it condoned. If we couldn't manage to join these three strategic factors in one time and space, there would be no triumph. . . . The absence of a framework for adequate discussion, when added to our immaturity as men, as revolutionaries, and to the repressive situation, led to our further separation, our splintering in practice into the three tendencies mentioned above. . . . The oldest comrades began to distrust the newer comrades who were beginning to gain prominence as leaders in different areas, while the newer ones, ignorant of how difficult the struggles had been in former years, underestimated their more veteran comrades. . . .

You must remember that we were working in the midst of the most brutal repression, that we could not undertake a whole nationwide movement, that each one had to pursue the work that his particular reality imposed on him. . . . Now the fact that we sprang from a common trunk greatly helped us. It meant that we mutually respected the work of the other branches. For example, the insurrectionist branch was not fighting to create another student revolutionary front; it allowed its organization, which played so important a role in Nicaragua, to continue under the control of the other branches. Nor did it intervene in the work being carried out by "proletarian" comrades in various production centers. And this was reciprocated on their part. . . . What happened was that everyone wanted to hegemonize the movement, wanted to see who came out best in the struggle. But those things were gradually overcome.⁷¹

(Observe, in comparison, that in El Salvador overlapping is frequent. For example, the ERP does not limit itself to its military function: it tries to cover the other two branches with its own Party of the Salvadoran Revolution and its own Popular Leagues-28th of February.)

Another factor for unity against Somoza

was Somoza himself; a visible, personal head, always the same, of a long-standing bloody dictatorship, which made the union of all those opposed to it much easier. Negative alliances are easier than positive ones (as is now beginning to be seen in Nicaragua, and was seen in Mexico after the fall of Porfirio Díaz). But in El Salvador, against whom is the general alliance to take place? Only against the United States, if they should commit the blunder of invading. Against the junta? The junta changes constantly. Against some member of the junta? All have changed signs at least once: Abdul Gutiérrez the enemy becomes friend and then enemy again; Majano the enemy becomes friend, then enemy, then friend; Ungo the friend turns enemy and then friend again; Duarte the friend turns enemy, and nothing is to keep one from supposing that he could turn friend again. Against the army? Nobody in the opposition speaks of dismantling it (which would sound utopian) but rather of forming alliances with certain heads and expelling others, without much precision as to just which ones.

To quote Cayetano Carpio, commander of the FPL: "In Nicaragua, Somoza held all the cards. In El Salvador, the successive puppets have never been able to form a dynasty. They unseat each other, and in the brief period when it's their turn to kill and rob, they fatten till they burst."⁷² The anonymity implicit in "the 14 families" is significant. Now they're even more anonymous: "the 14 great families, now put at 244."⁷³ There is no Somoza to unite against: only an anonymous crowd, a shifting constellation.

All indications are that El Salvador is not a very pyramidal country. Its gross national product is some \$3 billion.⁷⁴ It might seem to be a family business, as Nicaragua was for the Somozas; but that isn't the case: there are too many heads for such a small business. The legendary "14 families" were too many for any one of them to impose itself; all the more so now that the talk is of 244. And this ever more fragmented economic power is not the only power: the army has a decisive weight; the Church and the university, a certain weight each. Rather there seems to be a kind

of cooperationist motive, but at the top, not the bottom. Nobody can dominate without aligning himself, but the coalitions are shifting and the power blocs unstable, because there is great disagreement as to how to manage the country; especially on how to manage those on the bottom. Some believe that to give ground spurs new demands, others that not to give ground will spur further demands. Some believe that reformism is dangerous because it leads to communism, others that it's dangerous because it impedes the revolution. Some believe in violence, others in negotiation.

All of this takes place on top. Hence the dividing line between those in power and in the opposition keeps shifting, leaving relatives, friends, classmates and colleagues on opposite sides. This can be better understood by keeping in mind that El Salvador is the size of Mexico's state of Hidalgo [about 8,100 sq. mi.—or of Massachusetts, which has 8,257 sq. mi.] and has less than 5 million inhabitants—and that back when many of those now fighting each other were at the universities (20 or 30 years ago), only a few dozen were being graduated in all the country. In other words, everyone knew each other. Back then, San Salvador was a city of a few hundred thousand inhabitants. If, besides, there is not much of a middle class in El Salvador, then everything must go on in a limited circle of acquaintances, neighbors, classmates, colleagues, friends, and relatives, who make up the privileged minority; and still there are too many to all come to lead. The population explosion, quite high in El Salvador, seems also to be taking place among those who aspire to lead and for that very reason there is an overpopulation of organized bodies: Salvadorans do not seem much given to subordinating (and pyramiding) themselves, rather to setting up separate houses.

Perhaps that is the reason the groups and groups of groups and subgroups proliferate among the opposition, among the commissions and letterheads and chiefs and spokesmen. You need a directory just to follow the news in the papers. The list, on page 14, is neither complete nor exact. It seems there is a

National Democratic Union, but since there's a Democratic Nationalist Union, which sometimes gets called the Democratic National Union, it isn't clear whether the former is a separate body or a typographical error. On the other hand, it's clear enough that the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation, sometimes abbreviated as FFMLN but more generally as FMLN, is not the same as the Farabundo Martí Popular Forces of Liberation, abbreviated FPL:

Note the frequency of combination words: bloc, coordinative, front, league, national, unified, union. The opposition seems quite aware that they have a problem of integration, but they have not resolved it. And it wouldn't seem easy. Integration implies a bitter pill for all those who lead (except one): to quit leading. This is not a problem for those on the bottom: it's a problem of those on top. The "crisis in leadership" pointed to by Dalton, the fact noted by Ortega that "everyone wanted to dominate," impose himself on the rest, is no small problem. Nor is it necessarily a question of being small: if someone has risked his life to achieve what he believes in, it is very hard, after so many sacrifices, to sacrifice what has given his sacrifice meaning: the achievement of what he believes in.

No one has yet written a history of the private interests in the Mexican, Cuban, Nicaraguan, and other Latin American revolutions, who has been inspired by Silvio Zavala's *Private Interests in the Conquest of New Spain* (*Los intereses particulares en la conquista de la Nueva España*, which was published in Madrid, 1933, and should be reissued). In the same way as Zavala learned to read the epic of the conquistadores without letting himself be drawn in by heroic rhetoric—just as he came to view the conquest as an enterprise with outlays, costs, profits, contractors, partners, employees, problems of management, of ownership and distribution—so must there be a reading of our own revolutionary epic. Today, curiously enough, when we are supposedly more scientific and materialistic than ever, we are letting ourselves be most carelessly swept up in heroic, Manichean, idealistic rhetoric.

Who are the proprietors of a revolution? Who has the right to the privileged positions? How do revolutionary associates bargain with each other? How do they distribute shares? Those who let themselves be swept along by heroic rhetoric always lament the disunity, the conflicts between revolutionary groups, as if it were natural for private interests to be subordinated to the general good. But those who lead, or attempt to lead, know perfectly well that behind the lovely haze of unity looms the private interest of a big shot over the private interest of a little shot: the decisive fact of who is subordinate to whom. Everyone likes to head something bigger, as long as he's heading. From this point of view, everyone advocates union. But if he's not going to head, the alternative to keep on heading something smaller can be perfectly acceptable.

To set up or keep a separate house, separate syndicate, separate party, separate faction, separate armed band or enterprise can be more attractive than what you might get in exchange for giving up your independence. It can also be less attractive: the risk of being liquidated in the hierarchical conflicts of the new entity might be more than the risk of being liquidated in isolation; the per capita power of subordinating yourself might be greater than of not subordinating yourself, and so on.

It is significant that *Pueblo* (publication of the FAPU) should think fit to reprint "the most important excerpts from the speech on 'The Formation of the Party' given by Dr. Fidel Castro in Havana on December 2, 1961." This speech addresses the problem of the contributions of associates and the distribution of shares:

What did it mean, the moment that brought about the union of all the revolutionary organizations? Well, it meant among other things hundreds, thousands of cadres . . . of people who had undergone sacrifices. . . . It wasn't easy, and it was a long process too, but finally they were coming together . . . sectarian manifestos were disappearing, just as exclusivism is disappearing now.

[But next Castro takes up those who have rights:] How are we trying to do this? By calling

everyone? Flinging the doors wide open so that everyone can join this party? No. . . .

[Nevertheless:] By absolutely no means must "I was a Communist" or "I planted bombs" or "I was in the Sierra" be worn on our sleeves. Whatever the merits that each may have, comrades, there is a still greater merit, and it is the merit of what lies ahead.

The day he was kidnapped, Alvarez Córdoba spoke clearly about this problem, though assuming it would be overcome in a future government whose members

. . . will have to have great moral validity and will have demonstrated a love of the people. The political and social sectors that will fashion that government are today the cadres of the FDR, that is, democratic forces and revolutionary forces who are not trying to deal out quotas of power for themselves.⁷⁵

It is notable that he doesn't mention the FMLN and that he limits himself to speaking of the political and social sectors, not the guerrillas. This can be interpreted as to include both sides; but it would mean counting the political-military groups on the political side and counting the FMLN as the army of the FDR.

If one recalls that the guerrilla groups sprang up precisely because they would not submit to the Communist party and its political path to power, it is scarcely believable that they would now be ready to hand over their arms to a politico, and one just arrived from the opposition at that. Alvarez "toured various nations on the continent and in Europe in quest of international solidarity," the same article goes on: which implies having his own supporters, not depending exclusively on guerrilla arms. His successor, Guillermo Ungo, declared on December 20, 1980, in Managua that "before Christmas is over" they would announce the formation of a government backed by the FDR and the FMLN.⁷⁶ When the time was up, it was announced that "The Democratic Revolutionary Front [FDR] will in the coming days give out the names of the team of the provisional government of El Salvador, and the outlines of the revolutionary regime."⁷⁷

And 15 days later, instead of giving the names, Ungo declares that the formation of

the Democratic Revolutionary government “will be a process parallel to the military and political offensive going on at this moment”; “there will be no government in exile, it will be a government firmly rooted in native soil.”⁷⁸ But the government still does not exist: it isn’t easy to accept that someone else might head it and deal out quotas of power. Despite the declaration of commander Fermán Cienfuegos, chief of the FARN, that “In reality the political diplomatic commission (headed by Ungo) will assume plenipotentiary status—it is not yet the democratic-revolutionary government but it is the germ of the future official arrangement.”⁷⁹

It is clear enough that not all the guerrillas were ready to leave the formation of the government in the hands of the *políticos*. They preferred taking the January 10th military initiative so as to install it in liberated territory—that is, under their control instead of the *políticos*—though surely various parallel governments were being established, as in San Lorenzo. And likely as not, some commander is dreaming of how, by one of those fortunes of war, it might suddenly happen that he and only he is left in command: to “hegemonize the movement.”

Joaquín Villalobos:

We are not advocates of the traditional concept of unity, that is, of organic unity to be achieved all at once. . . . We conceive of unity as a process that starts with permanent coordination, not incidental, not one in which the interests of one particular hegemony take priority within the alliance of revolutionary forces. . . , moving eventually toward the organic phases. . . . Today there aren’t even any political differences among the revolutionary organizations, but subjective interest almost demands that differences exist because they are different organizations. . . . An ample criterion must prevail so as to allow the revolutionary forces to win over the democratic ones.⁸⁰

In other words: the armed opposition is not the army of the political opposition; it acts on its own account and, to the contrary, tries to win over (that is, subordinate) the political opposition. For its part, there is no general commander within the armed opposition; each commander acts on *his* own account,

though in coordination, until such time as subjective interests can be overcome, that is, until one commander wins out over the rest.

In October 1979, Villalobos acts to stir up repression in order to spoil the game for the political opposition, which had joined behind the coup leaders. It isn’t hard to predict that he will move to block any government headed by the political (rather than the military) opposition from taking office, and that he will try to block any general command not headed by himself. And this for one very simple reason: as long as he wields the arms (whether his own faction’s or the coalition’s), he’ll be his own law, as he has been till now: truth, justice, the historical meaning of the revolution, will remain in his care. But the moment he subordinates himself, he will no longer have control over the official truth. The official truth will be subject to political bargaining, in which his position is vulnerable: at any moment his comrades could liquidate him politically, exposing him as Roque Dalton’s assassin.

All this implies, for that very reason, problems of representation. Villalobos signs a pact with Mena Sandoval and announces it as if it were a pact between the FMLN and the [Movement of] Military Youth.⁸¹ This would imply that they have the authority to do so: that they are the respective heads or their authorized representatives. But that doesn’t appear to be the case: word has it that Villalobos is the second most important man in the FMLN, not the first; that Majano is the leader of the Military Youth, not Mena Sandoval. In such matters, of course, there are vested interests to add to the confusion: interviewers, their subjects, and we readers have a common interest in supposing that the person interviewed is a great figure, that the interviewer has obtained important statements from a top figure, and that we are reading important things said by an important man. Note that the names change constantly and yet they are always described as the key or one of the key figures of the principal or one of the principal organizations.

On April 22, 1981 it was announced that “the Salvadoran revolutionary movement has entered into negotiations with the ruling

junta.” Who says this? No less than “the leader of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN), commander Ana María.” But further along in the same item she is said to be “also second in command of the Popular Forces of National Liberation (FPL).”⁸² And the following day a denial is issued: “The political-diplomatic commission of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) this morning emphatically deny the existence of any negotiations with the Ruling Salvadoran Junta.” Who says this? José Napoleón Rodríguez. “Evidently the commander was misquoted by the press,” Rodríguez points out, “or else she was simply stating positions that do not correspond to the views currently held by the FDR-FMLN.”⁸³

Note: “the leader of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation” makes Ana María sound like “the” leader of that group of groups; even more so when it concerns a declaration of that magnitude. But it later turns out that she is a second-rank leader of one of the member groups—whose name, as it happens, is confused with that of the umbrella group: it is the Farabundo Martí Popular Forces of Liberation, not the Popular Forces of National Liberation.

Now then: the umbrella organism of several (not all) of the armed opposition groups, the FMLN, along with the umbrella organism of several (not all) of the political opposition groups, the FDR (none of which is subordinated to any other), have formed in tandem a Political Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN-FDR, which Ungo heads and which in this case, incidentally, is cited in reverse order as the FDR-FMLN. But it isn’t Ungo who issues the statement. Does that mean anything? The reverse order—does that have any significance? The fact that, this commission existing, commander Ana María acted as spokesperson for the FMLN—does that mean anything? Is it a case of errors and confusions on the part of the press, or is it the situation itself that is confused? Clearly it’s some of each, who knows in what proportion: a conflict between leaders who support and those who reject the negotiations; a jurisdic-

tional conflict over who is invading whose territory by issuing statements; a situation confused in its own right, plus further confusions from those who report the news.

Back in March of 1980, the Mexican Committee of Solidarity with El Salvador called for “the recognition and support of the Mexican government for the Revolutionary Coordinative of the Masses” (CRM—made up of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, the Front for Unified Popular Action, the Democratic Nationalist Union, and the Popular Leagues-28th of February) “as the genuine representatives of the Salvadoran people.” The Committee asked that this recognition and support be expressed “morally, politically, diplomatically, and materially.”⁸⁴ From the name of the CRM and from the scope of the request, one might have thought it to be “the” opposition and even more than that: the legitimate power out of power. Naturally, if Mexico had recognized the CRM as such and backed it strongly, some opposition forces (not all) would have considered it advisable to join this constellation. But there were new constellations. A few months later the DRU appeared, which promptly lost the FARN, later winning it back. In connection with the DRU the FMLN was formed, supposedly as one single army, though as yet this isn’t so. And just when one might imagine that all the armed forces of opposition had been counted, it happened at the end of the year that the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers was incorporated.⁸⁵

The CRM was a political-military umbrella organism that Cayetano Carpio (“Marcial,” commander of the FPL) was apparently seeking to control.⁸⁶ Perhaps for this reason, the DRU first and later the FMLN were formed as purely military in makeup, with first four, then three, then four, then five guerrilla groups taking part in equal measure, though clearly they did not all have the same capacity (at least three of the five, at different times, have claimed to be the most important). In parallel fashion, the FDR was formed as purely political. And now, instead of the CRM, there is the tandem FMLN-FDR or FDR-FMLN. But the CRM hasn’t disappeared: “it joined the Democratic Revolu-

tionary Front and continues to function.”⁸⁷ It is an umbrella organism that is now part of another umbrella organism, which operates alongside yet another umbrella organism. For its part, the CRM is made up of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, the Front for Unified Popular Action, etc., and each one seems to be still another umbrella organism.

All these organizational constellations keep evolving, and tend to be more organic on paper than in reality, where the member groups go on acting on their own account, or even worse: in the collective name on their own account.

VI. Popular Abstention

On January 22, 1981, more than 25,000 people in Mexico City marched in support of the Salvadoran guerrillas.⁸⁸ According to *Time*,⁸⁹ the guerrillas have 4,000 men under arms as against 16,000 in the regular army. If these figures are correct, the Salvadoran opposition is capable of putting six times as many Mexicans on their feet to protest in the streets as Salvadorans to wage war at home. But you don’t need figures to realize that the January 10th offensive had a larger public and greater solidarity worldwide than popular support in El Salvador.

On September 5, 1980, the commander of the Armed Forces of National Resistance declared: “This year will not end without the overthrow of the current Democratic Christian military dictatorship.”⁹⁰ Four months later, the new leadership of the FARN announced that “Mr. Reagan will find an irreversible situation in El Salvador when he arrives at the White House,”⁹¹ and that the insurgents’ final offensive “will come before the new president of the United States takes power.”⁹² Carlos Torres of the FPL concurred that “conditions are ready for the final offensive in El Salvador.”⁹³ And commander “Ana Maria, describing herself as second in command of the Popular Forces of Liberation, formed in 1970 by university students and dissident members of the Communist party,” declared “I can’t give you the exact date or hour, but we are very near to our final battles.” And—

A university professor and leftist sympathizer, speaking of the final offensive, stated: “In January of last year they said it would come in a matter of a few days. In June, in a matter of weeks. Now, who knows.” Ana Maria called this skepticism understandable but explained that her group, the strongest of the guerrilla organizations, had never before declared that a final offensive was imminent. The Popular Forces of Liberation have always been cautious, but I can tell you that we are now in the final phase, she stated.⁹⁴

The information bulletin of the FDR headlined an article: “The People Prepare for the Final Offensive.”⁹⁵

On January 4, 1981, this announcement appears: “Strike in El Salvador Until Power is Seized: FDR”; the strike “will last an indefinite time, will include all services in the country, and will end only when the revolutionary organizations” take power.⁹⁶

On January 10, 1981, scarcely ten days before President Reagan is to take office (which shows they were hoping for an eruptive event that, for that very reason, could not be purely military but rather a chain reaction throughout the entire population following the military initiative), the FMLN announced:

At 5:00 this afternoon the general offensive was launched. The enemy is lost; we have him surrounded; popular justice is at hand.⁹⁷ . . . The general command at the same time summoned the people to set up “local powers” throughout the country, alternatives to the present municipal authorities, and to erect barricades and supply food and water to the popular combatants. . . . People of El Salvador, we have begun the national liberation. The moment has come to take to the streets. . . . A final call [went out to the] honest and progressive [sectors of the army, to support the insurrection]. . . . If they don’t, they will have to deal with the FMLN.⁹⁸

In effect, the guerrillas called a plebiscite to demonstrate before all the world that, though the government had rigged the 1972 and the 1977 elections, the guerrillas had the majority vote, to be proved by the overwhelming majority supporting their offensive. One month earlier, in an interview titled “FMLN: Triumph Cannot Be Military Alone,” Joaquin Villalobos had declared:

Our enemies have taken to spreading misleading reports that what we're after is the physical death of all members of the armed forces. But this is neither true nor possible. . . . Those army sectors that take a progressive position and patriotic and revolutionary viewpoints have an important role to play. . . . We are counting for victory on the genius and heroism of all our people.

Q: How much fire power do you currently have?

A: We can't give any public statements. However, we cannot say that the enemy's power is apt to diminish. . . . In any case we will achieve victory, because history has shown that the people win in spite of a fire power inferior to the enemy's.⁹⁹

In other words: the fire power was insufficient for a military victory, but it was hoped that it would be sufficient as a civic detonator of the overwhelming majority. Majano, also in an interview, put it explicitly:

Q: Colonel, based on your military experience, do you believe that the armed opposition to the government has a chance to triumph?

A: Well, militarily it is difficult, because of the military power of the armed forces. But since the problem is also the illegitimacy of the government, it is evident that this can galvanize forces and then the people will definitely come out winning.¹⁰⁰

But, as was later reported—

. . . the people did not offer the first sign of an uprising, . . . there was nothing but a few crumbs of support on the part of the population. . . . There were a few cities that remained mostly under the control of guerrilla forces for several days. In certain cases, these were important cities, such as San Francisco Gotera or Zacatecoluca. And, as a persistent denial of the government's persistent claims, until Thursday one small village, named San Lorenzo, continued welcoming dazzled journalists to see what a town under guerrilla control was like. It must be understood that San Lorenzo, which in better times had some 3,000 inhabitants, now held no more than 300, of which some 100 were guerrillas. It must also be understood that the town is surrounded by army soldiers. And, finally, it must be understood that a village like San Lorenzo, an advertisement for the more

fanatical press, is also a sign that matters are still not totally reconciled among the guerrillas: last week there were four command posts operating in the town, each under the charge of a different guerrilla organization.¹⁰¹

In other words: instead of the overwhelming majority taking over local political power, they fled from San Lorenzo. It was the guerrillas who took power in an empty town, and a power fragmented at that into four separate parts.

There were several "honest and progressive" officers who responded to the "final call." Captain Francisco Emilio Mena Sandoval

gained celebrity in El Salvador when on January 10, coinciding with the announced guerrilla general offensive, and together with Captain Marcelo Cruz, he led the uprising of the 2nd Infantry Brigade in the city of Santa Ana (second largest in the country), and joined with a full company of well-armed soldiers of the FMLN. And so, as no doubts may remain as to what is now going on in the Salvadoran army, it is worth mentioning that Captains Mena Sandoval and Cruz ordered the execution of the second commander and highest-ranking officer present at the time of the events. . . . [This is offered as] the most eloquent proof of the headlong collapse of the military dictatorship.¹⁰²

The above-named captain stated . . . that he is neither a traitor nor a murderer.¹⁰³

Going further, Captain Francisco Emilio Mena Sandoval, representative of the designated Military Youth, signed with commander Joaquín Villalobos, of the FMLN, the basis for the constitution of the future army of El Salvador, according to announcements to the international press.¹⁰⁴

[The future army] will result from the merging of forces and not from the absorption of one force by the other. . . . Villalobos, of the general command of the FMLN, and Mena Sandoval, for the Military Youth, made public a so-called *Base Document* emphasizing that the programs of the coup d'état that overthrew General Carlos Humberto Romero in October 1979, and those . . . proposed by the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) "are identical," and stressing that the actions initiated on the tenth of last month, the beginning of the

insurgents' general offensive, "are the first step toward convergence" between the Military Youth and the FMLN "in the construction of the new army."¹⁰⁵

The merging of forces, according to the base document, will not aim at demilitarizing the government. The two primary objectives are: "(1) To defend the national sovereignty and guarantee the victories of the revolution, protecting it from counterrevolutionary attacks, both from inside and outside El Salvador. (2) To instruct and organize the people militarily." Moreover, it was agreed that there would be "respect for the rank and seniority of the officers of the Military Youth and of the FMLN" and that the "military profession would receive just and adequate compensation for its contribution to society."¹⁰⁶

Amid the frightful Salvadoran slaughter, there is a certain black humor in speaking of compensation to the military profession for its contribution to society. No mention is made of purging the murderers. The talk is of respecting the rank and seniority of the officers of both parties. The talk is of militarizing the people. Perhaps this is why Captains Mena and Cruz supported the insurrection, while "the people did not offer the first sign of an uprising."

People who come into contact with armed troops (military, paramilitary, or guerrilla) are afraid. If further, as is natural, those armed troops need provisions, need information—capable as they are of carrying out unpredictable whims—such contact is hardly desirable. Even less so if, repeatedly, first one and then another band comes in and takes what it wants, one way or the other. Not only do you repeatedly have to give to one and all: what was given to one today puts your life in danger when the next bunch shows up. So the towns empty out: those who are able flee, with good reason. Roberto Roca, one of the five commanders of the DRU of the FMLN, remarked on the fact that, in the general offensive, "popular participation has not been all the FMLN had hoped for":

The difficulties we have to overcome, not only

at this moment but throughout this long and hard war are many. In the first place, it is difficult to supply ourselves with food under the conditions we live in. This places great demands on the people who live in the zones of support. At times it is hard to get anything to eat, or to get it quickly.¹⁰⁷

A commander of the FPL:

The people in the countryside are afraid. They give us food, though, and show us where to escape. But it's a fact that the inhabitants of Zacatecoluca did not come out in force during the attack to help fight. We are convinced, nevertheless, that they will do so when we have sufficient strength.¹⁰⁸

The problem gets worse when the guerrilla actions against the government cause hardships among the population: when people are left without water, without lights, without bridges, when their work places are destroyed, clinics, and public service offices; when harvests, houses, and cars are burned; when civilians are "executed" under accusation of being "ears" (enemy informants) or paramilitaries.

• Items from the bulletin *FARN Parte de Guerra* Nos. 29-32:

Last Monday, Aug. 18 (1980), at 9:30 P.M., a militia squadron of the FARN carried out an action of burning the cantina Los Blancos, District of La Paz, producing an engagement that yielded one "ear" name of Echegoyen, executed, and another "ear" . . . gravely wounded. . . .

On Monday the 25th and Tuesday the 26th of August, several squadrons of our Regular Army in progress secured over both days a broad rural zone lying on either side of the Chalchuapa-Ahuachapán highway between El Arado Canton and Atiquizaya. During the two days the people's forces submitted to summary justice 20 "ears" on whom fell the full weight of the Revolutionary Laws. In the two days there was no engagement with the Bourgeois Army.

[In the military capture of San Martín] 10 "ears" were taken, who were submitted to summary popular justice and executed, . . . then, when our forces had withdrawn in orderly fashion and without losses . . . [guards arrived and] committed all manner of atrocities and

the murder of innocent people; . . . more than 10 innocent civilian elements, of whom 6 were termed "subversives" by the fascist bourgeois press, were murdered in cold blood by the enemy to boost his sagging combat morale.

- Items from the bulletin *FARN Parte de Guerra* No. 42:

Sept. 13, 1980: Execution of the night watchman Maximo Hércules, alias El Vaquero, who has been terrorizing the population of Reparto Santa Margarita, Ciudad Delgado. Heavy gunfire was exchanged with our militia, the watchman and a second individual with him were shot down. We recovered .38 caliber revolver in excellent condition.

Sept. 29, 1980: At 7:15 A.M., at the Guatemala estate, execution of the . . . goon Jorge Chávez. An engagement took place, and one of the tenants of the estate was shot down in the crossfire.

Oct. 8, 1980: Engagement in Santiago Texcuangos, execution of 3 "ears" and a local ex-commander who had been wounded. This action was carried out by the Militia Platoon "Israel Rodríguez." Capture of Radio Internacional, FARN message broadcast.

Oct. 14, 1980: Bus barricade on the Northern artery, San Salvador (11:00 A.M.). At 11:00 A.M., capture of Radio Señorial, FARN message broadcast. This same day, militia comrades Edgardo and Edith, of Soyapango, were captured. . . . Edgardo was assassinated on the spot; comrade Edith was savagely raped by the 8 goons and then assassinated. . . . The heroism of these two fallen comrades in the clutches of the enemy, and the savagery of the Dictatorship goons, are the clearest proof of the class nature of the engagement taking place on a daily basis in our country.

Oct. 17, 1980: Distribution (of leaflets) in Bosques del Matazano. Execution of an "ear" infiltrated in the FARN. Execution of an "ear" (the only name he gave us was Quique) 10 meters north of the Cine Paris, San Salvador, at 4 P.M. Two pistols recovered, a .45 and a .22 caliber.

- Items from the *Boletín Informativo* No. 4, of FAPU, Nov. 21-29, 1980:

"A guerrilla assault group from the FMLN early this morning dynamited the Social Security offices at Ahuachapán." "In the

town of Las Delicias . . . an FMLN assault group dynamited a fumigation hangar, leaving 3 planes destroyed and the rest badly damaged." In the town of Las Vueltas "10 paramilitary loan offices were burned." "More than 100 guerrillas burned a coffee plantation in the town of Acaguapa." "In Tepetitán a sugar mill was also burned at the same time as 3 towns in the rural zone were occupied, 5 paramilitaries executed." In Cojutepeque "3 businesses were destroyed whose owners are linked to the repressive forces." "An electric power boosting station near the city of Acajutla" was dynamited. "The General Office of Transportation was attacked north of San Salvador, and vehicles set on fire in various parts of the city."

Clausewitz's maxim—that war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means—is usually understood as a simple expression of the arrogance of power. In reality, Clausewitz argues against senseless military actions, those not part of an overall plan. Thus an isolated victory might prove useless and even counter-productive. "Political intention constitutes the end, whereas war is the means; and means conceived independently of the end have no place."¹⁰⁹ What's the use of destroying the Social Security offices at Ahuachapán? It proves that the government can't put down the guerrillas. But it also earns the hatred of numerous sick people. What's the point of killing a presumed enemy collaborator? It dissuades the witnesses from collaborating with the enemy. For this purpose it is not necessary for the one being "executed" to have collaborated: what counts is that the witnesses be convinced it could happen to them. But it also convinces them that they are caught between two repressive fires, and that the best thing is to get out, or, in any case, not to side with anyone, since it might cost them their life when the next ones come along.

The results of the general offensive called on January 10 showed that militarily the guerrillas have enough strength to resist but not to win; and that their political strength is analogous. Neither the government nor the guerrillas won the "plebiscite"; it was won by the abstainers.

VII. Some Conclusions

1. According to Alexander Haig, the Salvadoran situation has little to do with the Salvadorans: El Salvador is simply the stage where two great powers are confronting each other. A superficial reading of the press leaves a very different impression: the Salvadorans on the bottom, exploited and murdered by those on top, have taken up arms against an oppressive regime backed by the United States. A more careful reading suggests something else: the true conflict is above all internal and above all at the top. Those on top cannot agree on how to treat those on the bottom: this is the conflict, in which those on the bottom are both subject and victims.

2. Those responsible for the Salvadoran tragedy that began in October 1979 are the leaders who cannot agree among themselves; in particular, those who believe in violence, both in power and in the opposition; *and of these, above all the ones in power.*

The civil opposition did what it had to do: win the elections in 1972 and 1977. Its willingness to make changes without resorting to violence reached the extreme of cooperating with the military rulers and even with the coup leaders. In contrast, those who believe in violence have in fact created a vacuum of power. They hold irreconcilable positions as to how and who should govern, but they agree (for different reasons) on a scorn for legitimacy, for elections, for reforms, for the minimum rights of every human being.

Violence can be legitimate, but it is not a source of legitimacy. Resorting to violence does not create power: it costs power. Power is not founded in violence but rather in a consensus of approval whose highest expression is never again having to resort to violence. Neither Batista nor Somoza lost power principally on account of arms. They lost it because Castro built an overwhelming consensus of approval (beginning among his own comrades); because Somoza built up an overwhelming consensus of disapproval. But in El Salvador there is a vacuum of power: there is no Castro and no Somoza. There are shifting constellations of leaders grappling

for power, who haven't managed to establish a consensus even among themselves.

3. The greatest obstacle to establishing that minimum consensus lies with those who believe in violence. Though they have private interests (which would presumably allow for negotiations on the basis of real interests), the true problem lies in their unreal interests: in the illusion that violence can establish a consensus, in the passion for imposing their ideas and their interests through violence. They must be disarmed. Given their violence, it is clear how utopian it would be to renounce legitimate violence. But legitimacy does not come from arms, rather from consensus. An army that tolerates its own murderers not only makes blood run: it keeps destroying power, finally creating a vacuum that can be filled by an alternative consensus. But an opposition that tolerates its murderers also keeps destroying the opportunity for creating such an alternative consensus. And, of course, foreign interventions that reinforce those who believe in violence are equally destructive: they aggravate the problem instead of resolving it.

4. With those who believe in violence out of the picture, it would not be difficult for the quarreling leaders to come to terms with each other. Again and again they have sought accommodation: if none has held up it has essentially been because of the desperados, both left and right. This coming to terms could take many forms of cooperation or competition along lines that exclude violence. Once an accord has been reached, with the immediate goal of ending the slaughter, many problems would still lie ahead, but that is a separate question.

The true question for now is how to get those who believe in violence out of the picture. Each acts to provoke the others. To support one bunch so as to get rid of the others is counterproductive, because it is to join in their game (prove them right) and promote the continuing slaughter. For some other country to intervene militarily and impose order, as in Santo Domingo, Vietnam, Lebanon, Cambodia, or Afghanistan, would be worse.

The military and above all political defeat of the January 10th insurrection; the threats of a North American big stick; the fact that the guerrilla groups can resist almost indefinitely in the remote mountainous interior when limited to the defensive; and the fact that the armed opposition has killed far fewer than the regular and irregular army and police forces—all suggest the purging of murderers in the army and the police as an indispensable first step. These bear the greatest responsibility for the slaughter, and they have grown with the outcome of the January 10th insurrection and the renewed North American support.

The purge is not inconceivable: the testimony of the opposition in favor of purging a good part of the army is convincing. But it is important how it is done. To liquidate the murderers would be to become like them. To

submit them to military justice, the proper course, does not seem politically possible: it would be a long process, subject to all kinds of pressures and provocations, which would be criticized as a farce or an injustice, depending on the case. It seems more practical to grant them a kind of amnesty in exile, to get them quickly out of the country, even to give them money to make it possible.

At that point, equal terms could be offered to those guerrillas willing to accept such terms. A pact could be sought with the political opposition, disconnecting it from the armed opposition. It would be important not to treat this group too harshly: to let it continue in its diminished form, as a kind of guarantee that it would comply with the political opposition. This irregular situation could continue until elections were held, preferably supervised by an international agency.

Translated from the Spanish by DAVID PRITCHARD □

Notes

All publications, unless otherwise described, are Mexican.

¹ *El Día*, March 26 and 27, 1972; October 18 and 22, 1979; *New York Times*, February 21, 24 and 26, 1972; *Excelsior*, March 6, 1980; *Proceso*, August 8, 1980; *The Economist* (London), December 20, 1980; *Novedades*, March 8, 1981; Adolfo Gilly, *Guerra y política en El Salvador* (Mexico, D. F.: Nueva Imagen, 1981), pp. 40, 63.

² *El Salvador Libre*, bulletin of the FDR (El Salvador), No. 8, mid-Jan. 1981; *El Día*, Jan. 4, 1981.

³ *El Salvador Libre*, No. 8; *Uno más uno*, Jan. 3, 1981; *Razones*, Feb. 9-22, 1981.

⁴ *Uno más uno*, Nov. 28 and Dec. 10, 1980.

⁵ *Excelsior*, Nov. 29, 1980; *El Día*, Dec. 7, 1980; *Time* (New York), Dec. 8, 1980; *Uno más uno*, Dec. 10, 1980; *Razones*, Dec. 15-28, 1980.

⁶ *Siempre*, April 19, 1981.

⁷ Roque Dalton, *Las historias prohibidas de Fulgarcito* (Mexico, D. F.: Siglo XXI, 1974), p. 213.

⁸ *El Día*, Feb. 26, 1972.

⁹ *El Día*, Oct. 17, 1979.

¹⁰ *Excelsior*, Mar. 7, 1980.

¹¹ *Unesco Statistical Yearbook* (Paris, and Unipub New York), 1975, p. 310.

¹² *Excelsior*, Mar. 7, 1980.

¹³ *Excelsior*, Mar. 7, 1980.

¹⁴ *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris), May 5, 1981.

¹⁵ *El Salvador Libre*, No. 8.

¹⁶ *El Día*, Oct. 21, 1979.

¹⁷ *El Día*, Oct. 19 and 20, 1979; *Proceso*, Aug. 4, 1980.

¹⁸ *Siempre*, Feb. 25, 1981.

¹⁹ *El Día*, Oct. 23, 1979.

²⁰ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 26, 1980.

²¹ *El Día*, Oct. 19, 20, and 24, 1979.

²² *Excelsior*, Mar. 6, 1980.

²³ *Proceso*, Oct. 6, 1980; *Uno más uno*, Dec. 15, 1980; Feb. 5, 1981; *Siempre*, Feb. 25, 1981.

²⁴ *Excelsior*, Mar. 6, 1980.

²⁵ *Excelsior*, Mar. 6, 1980.

²⁶ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 15, 1980.

²⁷ *Excelsior*, Oct. 21, 28, and 29; Nov. 4, 7, 17, and 28; Dec. 11, 1980; Jan. 10, 23, 30, and 31; Feb. 6, 12, 18, and 23; Mar. 31, 1981; *Uno más uno*, Dec. 2, 1980; Jan. 16 and 29; Feb. 2 and 12, 1981; *El Día*, Dec. 14, 1980; *Proceso*, Feb. 16 and Mar. 9, 1981; *El Universal*, Mar. 14, 1981.

²⁸ *Excelsior*, Mar. 5, 10, and 11, 1980; *Proceso*, Oct. 6, 1980.

- ²⁹ *Excelsior*, Mar. 10, 1980.
- ³⁰ *El Día*, Dec. 21, 1980.
- ³¹ *El Día*, Oct. 22, 1979.
- ³² Gilly, *Guerra y política en El Salvador*, p. 40.
- ³³ *Excelsior*, Mar. 11, 1980.
- ³⁴ *Newsweek* [New York], Mar. 9, 1981.
- ³⁵ *Excelsior*, Mar. 24, 1981.
- ³⁶ *Proceso*, Oct. 6, 1980.
- ³⁷ *Excelsior*, Oct. 30, 1980.
- ³⁸ *Uno más uno*, Sept. 23, 1980.
- ³⁹ *Uno más uno*, Sept. 25, 1980.
- ⁴⁰ *Uno más uno*, Oct. 1, 1980.
- ⁴¹ El Salvador, Sept. 1980.
- ⁴² *Pueblo Internacional*, publ. of FAPU(El Salvador), Nov. 1980.
- ⁴³ *Pueblo Internacional*, Nov. 1980.
- ⁴⁴ *Uno más uno*, Oct. 1, 1980.
- ⁴⁵ *Proceso*, Oct. 6, 1980.
- ⁴⁶ *Excelsior*, Nov. 17, 1980.
- ⁴⁷ *Cambio*, Oct. 1978; Mar. 1979.
- ⁴⁸ *Excelsior*, Nov. 17, 1980.
- ⁴⁹ *Cambio*, Oct. 1978; Mar. 1979.
- ⁵⁰ *Excelsior*, Jan. 31, 1981.
- ⁵¹ *Excelsior*, Jan. 31, 1981.
- ⁵² *Uno más uno*, Jan. 11, 1981.
- ⁵³ Roque Dalton et al., *El intelectual y la sociedad* (Mexico, D. F.: Siglo XXI, 1969), pp. 21, 24, 99, 100-101.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- ⁵⁶ Eric R. Wolf, *Las luchas campesinas del siglo XX*, Siglo XXI, 1972.
- ⁵⁷ *Proceso*, Aug. 25, 1980.
- ⁵⁸ *Excelsior*, Jan. 5, 1981.
- ⁵⁹ Gilly *Guerra y política en El Salvador*, p. 40.
- ⁶⁰ Dalton, *El intelectual y la sociedad*, pp. 133-34.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
- ⁶⁵ *Excelsior*, Mar. 10, through May 16, 1980.
- ⁶⁶ *Excelsior*, Mar. 10, 1980.
- ⁶⁷ *El Salvador Libre*, No. 7, mid-Dec. 1980.
- ⁶⁸ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 21, 1980.
- ⁶⁹ *Uno más uno*, Feb. 16, 1981; *Time* (New York), Feb. 20, 1981.
- ⁷⁰ *Excelsior*, Mar. 6, 1980.
- ⁷¹ *Nicaracuac* (Managua), May-June 1980.
- ⁷² *Proceso*, July 25, 1980.
- ⁷³ *Uno más uno*, Mar. 16, 1981.
- ⁷⁴ *El Mercado de Valores*, May 24, 1981.
- ⁷⁵ *Uno más uno*, Nov. 28, 1980.
- ⁷⁶ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 21, 1980.
- ⁷⁷ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 31, 1980.
- ⁷⁸ *Uno más uno*, Jan. 15, 1981.
- ⁷⁹ *Uno más uno*, Jan. 16, 1981.
- ⁸⁰ *Excelsior*, Mar. 6, 1980.
- ⁸¹ *Uno más uno*, Feb. 5, 1981; *Siempre*, Feb. 25, 1981.
- ⁸² *Uno más uno*, Apr. 23, 1981.
- ⁸³ *El Universal*, Apr. 25, 1981.
- ⁸⁴ *Excelsior*, Mar. 5, 1980.
- ⁸⁵ *El Día*, Dec. 21, 1980.
- ⁸⁶ *Proceso*, Aug. 4, 1980.
- ⁸⁷ *Uno más uno*, Jan. 4, 1981.
- ⁸⁸ *Excelsior*, Jan. 23, 1981.
- ⁸⁹ *Time* (New York), Mar. 9, 1981.
- ⁹⁰ *Proceso*, Oct. 6, 1980.
- ⁹¹ *Excelsior*, Dec. 28, 1980.
- ⁹² *Excelsior*, Jan. 9, 1981.
- ⁹³ *Excelsior*, Dec. 28, 1980.
- ⁹⁴ *Excelsior*, Jan. 5, 1981.
- ⁹⁵ *El Salvador Libre*, No. 7.
- ⁹⁶ *Uno más uno*, Jan. 5, 1981.
- ⁹⁷ *El Día*, Jan. 11, 1981.
- ⁹⁸ *Uno más uno*, Jan. 11, 1981.
- ⁹⁹ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 15, 1980.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Uno más uno*, Dec. 26, 1980.
- ¹⁰¹ *Proceso*, Jan. 26, 1981.
- ¹⁰² *Siempre*, Feb. 25, 1981.
- ¹⁰³ *El Universal*, Feb. 20, 1981.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Siempre*, Feb. 25, 1981.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Uno más uno*, Feb. 5, 1981.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Uno más uno*, Feb. 5, 1981; *Siempre*, Feb. 25, 1981.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Proceso*, Jan. 26, 1981.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Proceso*, Feb. 23, 1981.
- ¹⁰⁹ Karl von Clausewitz, *Arte y ciencia de la guerra* (Mexico, D. F.: Grijalbo, 1972), p. 32. □

Jean Améry

Anti-Semitism on the Left

Introduction

The German-language cultural critic and essayist Jean Améry was born in Vienna on October 31, 1912, as Hans Mayer, the sole child of a Catholic mother and a Jewish father—who died as an Austrian rifleman in World War I. He was raised in the provinces, but returned to Vienna for university study. In 1935, the promulgation of the Nuremberg racist laws forced him to recognize his marginal Jewish identity as fully binding. Three years later, upon the German annexation of Austria, he fled to Belgium with his young Jewish bride. He was deported in 1940 to the Gurs internment camp in Southern France, but escaped and made his way back to Brussels—where he joined the Resistance movement. After being captured by the Gestapo and tortured, he was sent to Auschwitz in 1943. He survived the next two years in concentration camps, including Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen, and was finally liberated by the British in 1945.

Until 1964, when he agreed to deliver a radio address on the intellectual and Auschwitz, Améry had refused all literary activity in Germany. Thus he was already 54 years old when, two years later, he gained wide acclaim with the book that had resulted from the pivotal Auschwitz essay: *Jen-*

seits von Schuld and Suhne (1966; *At the Mind's Limits* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980]). Between this time and his suicide in 1978, he published a series of autobiographical-essayistic works, including studies on aging and suicide, and two novels. But it was, above all, *At the Mind's Limits* that founded his reputation as a moral spokesman for the victims of the Holocaust and set him on an unswerving course as a rebellious protester against the immorality of history, which already was witnessing the reemergence of anti-Semitism, not only on the right, but also among Améry's former allies of the left.

The essay translated here was originally titled "Der ehrbare Antisemitismus" ("Respectable Antisemitism"). It was delivered as an address on March 7, 1976 in Hamburg, at the opening session of the German Brotherhood Week, an interfaith event sponsored annually since 1951 by the *Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit* (Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation). It was printed in the June 1976 issue (30:6) of the German journal *Merkur*. The essay appears here with the kind permission of Mme. Améry.

SIDNEY ROSENFELD □

It is not a happy moment at which I appear before you to offer my thoughts on the Jewish Problem. It evidently exists once again and, indeed, on an international scale. It's "Brotherhood Week." But where are the brothers? If I were cynical enough, I would quote the American mathematician and chansonnier Tom Lehrer, who already years ago on the occasion of an American "Brotherhood Week" sang: "And the Catholics hate the Protestants and the Protestants hate the Catholics and the Moslems hate the Hindus—and everybody hates the Jews."

Of course, we are still far from a general hatred of the Jews as an ethnic group and religious community; fortunately so, even if we are perhaps not so far from it as optimists assume. Only one thing is already certain: there is a general uneasiness regarding the Jews. One is beginning to feel disturbing reservations, especially among people who only ten years ago tried one's patience with their philo-Semitic pretenses. Anti-Semitism has a collective infrastructure that is historically and psychologically deeply imbedded. If it is again becoming a reality today, three decades

after the discovery of what was done by the Nazis, then this has to do not only with time, which silently and steadily erodes ethical indignation, but also, indeed probably first and foremost, with the situation in the Near East. It is very dismaying that before our incredulous eyes young people, and particularly those who in the broadest sense of the term regard themselves as socialists, are reviving the age-old phenomenon we had believed was long since dead. We know it from the debate now in progress within the Second International, which traditionally has been well-disposed toward the Jews and pro-Israel. The young Socialists, to whom the Palestinians now appear as the freedom fighters and the Israelis as the imperialist oppressors, are insisting that the Second International disassociate itself from Israel. For the Third International the question doesn't arise anyway. For it, Israel is an imperialist, cancerous growth and the Jews in general are accomplices of the permanent capitalist conspiracy. The *Führer*, the U.S.S.R. commanded and one obeyed.

To be sure, there will be objections that Israel has nothing to do with the Jewish Problem in the broader sense. *One is not anti-Semitic, but anti-Israel.* It is easy to reply to this objection, all too easy. At this point, please permit me to quote the Germanist Hans Mayer, a man of thorough Marxist schooling. This author writes in his noteworthy book *Aussenseiter* (Outsiders):

Whoever attacks Zionism, but by no means wishes to say anything against the Jews, is fooling himself or others. The State of Israel is a Jewish state. Whoever wants to destroy it, openly or through policies that can effect nothing else but such destruction, is practicing the Jew-hatred of yesterday and time immemorial. How clearly this can be observed in the interplay of foreign and domestic politics is shown by the internal policies of the currently anti-Zionist countries. Internally, they will regard their Jewish citizens as virtual "Zionists" and treat them accordingly.

To what extent anti-Zionism makes use of the traditional anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish phantasms became clear to me recently while

I was reading the French newspaper *Le Monde*, which I do daily. Its special correspondent for the Near East, Michel Tatu, cited a photo volume published by the Egyptian government on the second anniversary of the October War; its text says literally: "In no army of the world are Jews desired . . . because for them money is always more important than principles. . . . Usurers are not fighters." Don't laugh at the fact that this is the voice of a country that in October 1973 was saved *in extremis* by America's pressure on Israel. Rather listen further. The journalist adds that this is a relatively moderate attack, that in the "more hawkish" Arab countries, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, one hears a still quite different tone. There is no need to insist that this sort of thing has nothing more in common with—unfortunately "normal"—territorial conflicts between sovereign states as, for example, the conflict between Algeria and Morocco. It is unadulterated Streicher. It is the most scandalous and, besides, the most stupid anti-Semitism. But in stating this, we must unfortunately take note of the fact that what is both base and stupid has triumphed more than once in the course of world history, and that there is no relying in the least on Professor Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

It is with this outrageous and stupid anti-Semitism, to the extent that it passes itself off merely as anti-Zionism, that young people are joining forces. Not just a few Nazi offspring of incorrigible parents or grandparents—but alleged socialists. And no one is opposing them with the necessary vigor. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie, whether German, French, or Belgian, breathes a sigh of relief that for once it can march along in the same step with the young generation, which it otherwise regards as a nuisance and whose antiauthoritarian outbursts get on its nerves. Entirely aside from its traditional, dormant anti-Semitism, this bourgeoisie has its special interests too, which now coincide most exactly and in a comforting way with the thoughtless anti-Semitism of the young, who

often have yet to see a Jew face to face. These bourgeois are interested in business deals: in oil and other things. One must make haste in order to “get in on a good deal,” as they put it. *Les affaires sont les affaires.*

Those multinational corporations that in all Western democracies are ready to accede to the Arab boycott demands for the sake of business know this very well. And they are happy at the thought that they, too, for a change, are moving in the direction of the objective spirit—providing that they have ever heard of it. In this way, anti-Semitism is becoming what it has not been and could not be since the discovery of the Nazi horrors: respectable.

One must concede, to be sure, that anti-Semitism as such would perhaps not have gained this respectability if there were really not a very deep tie and, if you will excuse the worn-out word, *existential* bond between every Jew and the State of Israel. I say “every Jew,” and immediately draw a line; for naturally there are a few self-hating Jews on call everywhere who are prepared to deny this solidarity, which applies to them, too, for the sake of some ideological phantasm or for reasons of both an illusory and a suicidal “objectivity.”

Aside from these special cases, who are more to be pitied than censured, the Jews feel bound to the fortunes and misfortunes of Israel, whether they are religious Jews or not, whether they adhere to Zionism or reject it, whether they are newly arrived in their host countries or deeply rooted there. I gladly offer my own person as a not entirely untypical example. I never belonged to the Jewish religious community; I was raised as a Catholic; I have no relatives at all in Israel and soon I will see the country for the first time in my life; I stem from an old Vorarlberg family; my cultural homeland once was Germany; today it is France; for the last 38 years I have been living in Belgium. And yet to the extent that I am interested at all in the national existence and independence of a community, it is Israel.

All this, of course, has nothing to do with any sort of abstruse myths of blood and race. It is very simply that the existence of a Jewish

state has taught all the Jews of the world to walk with their head high once more—a Jewish state whose inhabitants are not only merchants but also farmers, not only intellectuals but also professional soldiers, and not those “usurers” that the new Egypt is blathering about, despite all the empirical evidence, but rather, in their majority, craftsmen, industrial and agricultural proletarians. Some Jews had thought that in the socialist societies they would be able to walk upright as a matter of course. The Soviet Union and its vassal countries have done everything imaginable to cure them of their Marxism-Leninism. For this there is no more evident example than the fate of Leopold Trepper, the leader of “the spy network, The Red Orchestra,”* who had been truly a totally convinced Marxist, and who in the end, driven from his Polish homeland, found refuge in Israel.

When I speak of refuge, I am employing still another key word. For more is at stake for the Jews than just to walk upright. Israel is not only the country in which the Jew no longer permits his enemy to stamp him with a self-image, as Sartre understood it; it is also the virtual shelter for all of the insulted and injured Jews of the earth. Think only of the Jews in the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries, for whom an exit visa to Israel is the last hope of leading a life in dignity and decency. I expressly say: Israel is a *virtual hope*. If these Soviet Jews were to attain full, and no longer insultingly restricted, Soviet citizenship, probably only a small percentage of them would want to emigrate to Israel—just as today there are but few American Jews who are pressing into that Mediterranean country described by Thomas Mann as “dusty and stony.” But the virtuality is what counts. If ever somewhere in the world a grim fool should turn up whose *idée fixe* it might be to expel the Jews, the possibility of finding the shelter in Israel that, in Hitler’s time—thanks to British Mandate policies—was granted to relatively few Jews, binds every Jew to the fate of this tiny polity in the Near East.

* “The Red Orchestra” was an intelligence network during World War II that provided information about German military events to the Soviet Union.

I'd like to see them just once in the face of threat from a new Hitler—Messrs. Maxime Rodinson, Ernest Mandel, Eric Rouleau—all of them Jewish by birth, ideologically alienated, anti-Israel Jews! In lamentable fashion they would haunt the waiting rooms of Israeli consulates in order to secure the piece of paper that would save them, and they wouldn't give a damn about Marx's anti-Semitic aberrations, which at the moment are still sacred texts to them.

So much for what I have called the existential tie of all Jews to the State of Israel, and this has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with nationalistic or religious mysticism, which is always only mystification. I am talking about very real, political, social, and psychological facts. And already I hear the objections, and the questions: "And the Arabs? And their state? And their national dignity?" They are raised justifiably and demand an answer.

I am no specialist on Middle East questions and no better versed in the history of Zionism than any newspaper reader. But my scant knowledge suffices completely for making a few observations that must be just as obvious to common sense as to those experts who are not ideologically twisted. The Palestinians, who did not exist as a nation when the first Zionist immigrants set foot on the soil of present-day Israel, but who in our time are in the phase of becoming a nation, have a right to a state of their own. The Arabs who inhabited Israeli territory within its borders prior to the Six Day War have a right not to be treated as second-class citizens. I have already said on another occasion that in this entire conflict *right opposes right*.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the rights of the Palestinians—those who are now living within the area that became the State of Israel in 1948 and those who were driven from their homesteads by the wars (for which their fellow Arabs, after all, were not so entirely without blame)—the rights of these Palestinian Arabs in principle can be satisfied without insuperable difficulties. What is expected of the one group? That they be loyal citizens of Israel. What is demanded of the

others? That once and for all they clearly acknowledge the fact of the Jewish national state. The rest is of a purely technical nature and can therefore be overcome with some intelligence and good will.

And finally, what is expected of a public opinion that, from the far right to the far left, is ready to condemn Israel in the name of national identities and the right to peoples' self-determination? Nothing more than the recognition of the obvious fact that the much maligned Zionism is also a national liberation movement, that the Jews, too, the most martyred, most tragic people in the world, have a right to their national identity—in so far as they are searching for one and have not already assimilated religiously and ethnically to their host peoples. For that is certainly also a solution, but one that always requires two groups of participants: the ones who are assimilating and the ones who are prepared for their absorption.

All this is terribly banal. But it is nonetheless true since, after all—contrary to a distorted tenet of Adorno's holding that the banal cannot be true—it is always true, for otherwise it could not have become a banality. I repeat: in the Near East conflict *one right opposes another*. And I add: *danger, however, does not oppose danger of the same order*. The fact is that the Arab nations—from the Saudi Arabian despot who is spreading the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to the religiously possessed Qaddafi down to the "moderate," pro-Western Sadat and the self-styled Marxist Habash—are all determined to wipe out the State of Israel, as a Herr Göring once wanted to wipe out the cities of England. And it is another incontrovertible fact that in the whole world there is no one who will sound the alarm before a new genocide is set into motion. Really no one? Of course, that isn't entirely true. There are, for example, such personalities as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, known everywhere to be lackeys of imperialism, who protested against the shameless UN and UNESCO decisions. These two and a hand-

ful of others. But they have no power. Wherever there is power—from the White House in Washington to the Palais d'Elysée, to Downing Street, or the Kremlin (where they have long ago suppressed the fact that it was mainly Jews who stamped the Motherland of the World's Workers out of the ground of old Russia)—there is the readiness, paraphrasing the matter more or less diplomatically, to defend the “right of the Arabs,” which can be quantified in Petrodollars, and to sell the right of the Jews, which is the eternal non-right of the poor, for a few pieces of silver.

This kind of *Realpolitik*—in French one says “*La Réalpolitik*” when speaking of vile opportunism—seeps, uncheckably and constantly, into the lifeblood of what is called public opinion, which, as we know from sociological studies, consists of nothing but opinions about opinions. And we can regard as characteristic of this change in public opinion (not too long ago still favorable to Israel) the behavior of the Christian religious bodies, and especially that of the Vatican. In February 1976, during an Islamic-Christian colloquium—convening, of all places, in Qaddafi's Tripoli—Vatican representatives, first with hesitation but in the end submissively, signed a general condemnation of Israel in which Zionism was once again stigmatized as racism. And in a special reference to Jerusalem it stated: “The Islamic character of Jerusalem is a fact. . . . Judaizing of the city is as much to be avoided as the division and internationalization of the Holy City.” One thought one was dreaming: the nightmare of a joint Crescent-and-Cross crusade against Jewry! Surely, the Vatican later disassociated itself from this document that its representatives had, so inconceivably, countersigned. It went even beyond that: at a meeting between Catholic and Jewish theologians in Jerusalem, Rome assumed a position of an almost pro-Israel character.

Nonetheless, the Tripoli colloquium did not vanish from the collective consciousness. Nor does the Vatican's later pro-Israel position disavow what a Moslem participant in Tripoli had assured Western journalists in a private conversation: “The Vatican is iso-

lated,” the man had said; “it desperately needs the good will of the Moslem world with its vast population and power.”

It actually is the fascination with power that produced this change in the political climate. Nobody wants to swim against the tide, something that everyone knows is quite strenuous. Only few dare to stand by what yesterday was self-evident but now suddenly causes displeasure. Only a while ago it was natural to support the Israelis' right to their sovereignty; and now one suddenly catches oneself feeling that such a declaration has become a real test of courage and that, perhaps, it will become an offense tomorrow. From the political officeholder to the cautious journalist down to the man holding forth on politics on the street corner—everyone looks about expectantly, as though wanting to ask: What and how much is actually permitted again? Whoever has some insight and a bit of flair for recognizing the fluctuations of the forever fluctuating, will be inclined to assure these impatient people that, in fact, a good deal is not only permitted but called for. Wiseacres speak with relief of breaking a taboo, and have no inkling of the dark powers to which they are lending their voices.

The point is, however (and now I return to the subject that I have taken on here), that all this—I mean: the self-alienation of the left, the interests of international high finance and of the political powers, the maliciousness of the rulers, and the effusive exaltation of the subjected and dispossessed—all this has its effects on the world, in which, today as yesterday, the Jew will be burned. Such is the will of “sound popular instinct” in Harlem (New York), at the regular beer round in some Fürth or another; in the Café de Commerce in Dijon, or in some tiny town in Kent—and, naturally, all the more in every Arab bazaar.

Permit me now to open a parenthesis. In the familiar argumentation of the friends of the Arab cause it is routinely pointed out that in the world of Islam, in contrast to the Chris-

tian world, the Jews had always lived together with the Arabs peacefully and by mutual consent. That this was by no means so has been proven most irrefutably in an excellently documented book by Albert Memmi, a Tunisian Jew living in France, a man, moreover, who had always supported the Arabs when they were under French dominion in North Africa.

Anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism was always a matter of course for the Moslems. In the territory of Islamic rule the Jews were and always remained second-class citizens, and where they worked their way up, as in Moorish Spain, their situation was always precarious. In the most favorable instances they were tolerated, but they were never accepted. That has not changed. While it is possible in Israel for a politician who is a Communist and, at the same time, an Arab nationalist to become the mayor of a city, the few Jews who still live in Syria or Iraq or even in supposedly moderate Tunisia (where they may be no less indigent than their Arab oppressors) eke out their existence amidst constant humiliation and threat. The Christian world is as little concerned with their fate as with that of the Soviet Jews, for whom not only the road to total assimilation is blocked but also the flight to a land that even under the most difficult economic conditions must appear to them as the "Promised" one.

Existentialist-positivist and stubborn atheist that I am, it doesn't occur to me to convert the Jewish fate into a metaphysical phenomenon. In my eyes the Jews are as little a chosen people as an accursed one. They are nothing but the chance result of historical constellations that were unfavorable to them for two thousand years. Two millennia: that is a very tiny span of time in the unrecordable history of the human species. I can well imagine that a man of the stamp of a Lévi-Strauss, who is occupied with prehistoric societies and their structural myths, smiles gently and a bit scornfully at what are for him such microtemporal courses of events. This member of the Académie Française would

cease smiling only if there were a rude knock at his door and a harsh voice, no matter in what language, commanded him, the Jew, to open immediately and come along. To lull himself into a false sense of security would be quite wrong. As we all know, a man of still greater stature—Henri Bergson—was forced to wear the Yellow Star of David before a kind death saved him from the very worst.

No, the Jews and their historical existence are not a metaphysical phenomenon. They are, as I just said, more the victims of chance than of necessity—and also of that *indolence of the heart*, which in the Middle Ages plunged the peasant and in the heyday of capitalism the proletariat into unspeakable misery. Indolence of the heart: I choose to employ this old-fashioned formula. For it summarizes the factual situation better than the most sophisticated sociopsychological studies. The older ones among you may still have witnessed how, in the Third Reich, due to indolence of heart people quickly grew accustomed to their Jewish neighbor being fetched at night and deported.

Today everyone can observe how indolent hearts accommodate themselves when the world everywhere, be it the capitalist or the socialist one, is isolating the Israelis and the Jews who are one with them and thereby abandoning them to the catastrophe that is already hovering over their heads like a storm cloud.

In no time, the Near East question will become a new Jewish question. And we know from history how such a question is answered. The disassociation from Israel and with it from every individual Jew, as cautious as it is clear, hardly surprises the expert on indolent hearts. The millions of Jewish burnt offerings—oh, perhaps there were really "only" five million or even four, and not six million—have been paid off. And now let these eternal troublemakers be quiet; people have other worries; crisis, inflation, unemployment, energy problems. The wretch was led to his fall; suffering will overtake him and, like once Pontius Pilate did, the world will wash its hands of him.

Anti-Semitism, in the guise of anti-Zion-

ism, has become respectable. I won't elaborate on its roots here. Everyone knows them; enough research has been done on the subject. I will merely state what many newspaper articles, especially in France, have made clear to me. With an indolent heart, people act as if they know nothing of the existential tie of Diaspora Jews to Israel. Obtusely, they do not want to recognize that this union of despair is not whimsical folly, but that it merely expresses the plain fact that the burnt child, the Jew, knows in the depths of his heart where, and where alone, is the aid station willing to tend his burns.

The respectable anti-Semite has an enviably clear conscience, a spirit as calm as the sea. He also feels in agreement with historical developments, and this is conducive to his moral tranquillity. If, occasionally, he awakens from his apathetic drowsing, he asks the ritual questions: Is Israel not an expansionist state, an imperialist outpost? Has not Israel itself caused the trouble that is besetting it from all sides with the "immobility" of its policies? Does not the very idea of Zionism bear in it the original sin of colonialism, so that every Jew who avows solidarity with this land becomes personally guilty? It hardly pays to discuss such questions. After all, Israel's expansion was the result of the bellicose Arab fanaticism that already in 1948 promised the Jews nothing more than to "throw them into the sea." Jewish colonialism was not a colonialism of conquest. The word itself, both etymologically and politically, derives from the Latin *colonus*—farmer. Israel's "immobility" can be explained when we consider the situation of someone who is standing with his back to the wall. This person is not immobile, but a priori immobilized.

All this does not mean that I am unaware of the errors of Israeli policies. But I know, still deeper and more precisely, that Israel's errors are in ridiculous disproportion to the indifference of the others who are motivated entirely by *Realpolitik*, the Russians and the English, the French and the Germans, and tomorrow very likely the Americans—not to speak of the Arabs, who become incompre-

hensible when at the great feast of their nationhood (which I heartily grant them), they seem compelled to present the Jews as a burnt offering. Human sacrifices without end.

But one is used to such sacrifices, especially when Jews are concerned. The sacrifice of the Jews is in the best tradition, a sanctified custom. One cannot prevail against it. What good then is Brotherhood Week, for which we have gathered here? I admit my pessimism. But since I am not only a born pessimist but by temperament an enlightener and since, in addition, my home has been situated rather far to the left on the political map my whole life long, I don't wish to shrink from directing a few words to my friends from the leftist camp. The right would hardly respond to me anyhow. For even where it makes out to be genuinely pro-Israel, it inspires me with skepticism.

Certainly, there is more than one righteous, conservative man—perhaps he is even a former National Socialist—who is earnest about his friendship for the Jews and the State of Israel; and his motivation may have nothing to do with personal relief from guilt but rather with an insight into the facts. This must be expressly stated. Yet, as a mouthpiece of the social class that the right represents and of the tradition that it upholds and the political heritage that it transmits, it cannot possibly attain that unbiased, humane attitude toward the Jews, which is the only acceptable one. It would be entirely wrong to grant an advance in trust to those circles that a few decades ago were financing Hitler. For them Israel and the Jewish fate are only a welcome argument against everything that dares to question the existing social order. For the right, let us not forget, stands for order.

But the Jews, and also the Israeli Jews, yes, especially they, are an element of creative disorder. Jews were present wherever fossilized structures were being broken up: in Germany, starting with the "Young Germany" movement to the treatises of the Frankfurt School; in France, as members of the Popular Front, later as disciples of Sartre, and later still as structuralists; in the United

States, they are at the center of the liberal movements. And, concerning the Middle East, it was, without a doubt, the Jewish settlers in Palestine, with their attempt to create a democratic socialist society, who awoke the Arab nations from their centuries-long, deep feudal slumber. I ask the left to consider all this; for although it may have been led astray it is by nature generous. The progeny of Heine and Börne, of Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, of Erich Mühsam and Gustav Landauer cannot, dare not be the ones to spread this respectable anti-Semitism. For this rabid anti-Zionism will inevitably lead to anti-Semitism, and for every Jew, no matter where he lives and what political persuasion he adheres to, it is a mortal threat.

I am not exaggerating. With just a bit of imagination everyone can picture what would happen if Israel were destroyed. The surviving Israelis, having once more become mythic Wandering Jews, would flee from the site of the prophet Mohammed and pour out into the world. And again the world would behave as it did after 1933, when such underpopulated countries as Canada and Australia shut their doors to the Jews as though they were bearing germs of pestilence. Again Jews would be forced to earn their living by dubious and illicit work, through obscure financial transactions. For they would not even be acceptable as "guest workers," in times of crisis less than ever before. Once more the public would be concerned with the very old "Jewish Question"—which, if we believe Sartre, never was that but rather always a question of anti-Semites. No United Nations refugee committee then would be able to invest the Jews with normal civil rights. Anti-Zionism would be dead, all right. But crude anti-Semitism, aroused from the deepest layers of the collective unconscious and revitalized, would once again create a myth as a result of a historical chance constellation, the myth of the Wandering Jew, of Shylock.

All this, however, would have a twofold result, of which we must urgently be forewarned even now, for time is running out: this twofold result is the total damnation of a human community, and also the self-destruction

of what yesterday was still the left. At this very moment, the process is in motion. We are already witnessing how political groups that regard themselves as "leftist" don't waste a word when a despot and paranoid in Uganda commits abominable murders; how they do not protest when the absolute ruler of Libya enacts laws under which adulterous women are stoned; how they are discreetly silent when in Algeria not a single one of the Revolution's great *chefs historiques* any longer appears on the scene. Ben Bella? He merely exchanged the prisons of the French fascist officers for those of the "socialist" Boumedienne. The left holds its tongue. And to the degree that it talks, its vocabulary is distorted in the truest sense of the word. Stubbornly it terms "progressive" the tyrannic regimes of Syria and Iraq, where occasionally Communists, too, are thrown into jail.

Yet Israel—certainly no model state, but surely a polity that permits opposition, including antinational opposition—is in leftist mythology a "reactionary" land. All this is even worse than those uncanny dialectics that can be used to justify all and everything. It is political hocus-pocus. It is the total confusion of concepts, the definitive loss of moral-political standards.

I believe in all seriousness that the left must redefine itself within the context of the problem of Israel—that is, the Jewish Problem. Does the left still stand up for humanist values? Yes or no? Does it still believe that the concept of democracy embraces universal suffrage, freedom of speech, and the right of assembly—the *droits de l'homme*, which since the French Revolution, after all, have not exactly been unknown? Does the left still regard nationalism, as it always has, as a political error born of obstinacy? Or, rather, does it find nationalism acceptable wherever, under the sign of tyranny, it is directed against Jews—and unjust as soon as the Jews, for their part and under unbearable pressure, fall reactively into its trap?

Finally: is the left prepared to acknowledge that even if so-called *formal* democracy can-

not attain realization as long as economic democracy does not complement it, that *formal* democracy still must have absolute priority, since economic democracy can be built only on its foundation. Now to the last question: Is the concept of justice still binding for the left? Justice has been its *raison d'être* as long as it has existed; if the left sacrifices this concept as a barter for the fetish of revolution, it will destroy itself.

This brings us back to the question of Israel and the Jews. The creation of the State of Israel was an act of justice, as Gromyko, too, clearly proclaimed at the time in the name of the Soviet Union. No one can deny, and I, too, cannot conceal it here that, in carrying out just rehabilitation, injustices toward Arabs have occurred. Nonetheless, the injustice done to the Palestinian Arabs can be redressed without creating a global conflict over the issue. Even today they are not actually homeless, but they possess two states: Jordan, where they constitute the majority of the population, and Lebanon, where in alliance with Syria they are imposing their will. Certainly, it ought to be required that Israel and the Jews of the world contribute their share to the restoration of the full rights of the Palestinian Arabs. But if the Jewish state were destroyed, which is the aim, admitted or not, of all Arab politics from the right to the far left, from the King of Saudi Arabia to George Habash, an *irreversible injustice* would occur. A fleeting glance at history suffices for us to perceive this, if we are at all prepared for objective analyses. Here, precisely at this point, a left returning to its true self would take up its great task—if it were able to rid itself of a vocabulary to which it is compulsively clinging, and able to rid itself of a few political myths. Were it to withdraw from the Arabs its blind support and mechanical yes-vote, the left could help solve the problem of Israel, as well as the Jewish Problem.

We can be sure that the great majority of Israeli Jews, who are under such terrible pressure, are willing to seek reconciliation. And we can be sure of the understanding of the Jews outside Israel. The powerful and rich Arab nations need harbor no fears. In a paci-

fied Near East region, the dreamers of a Greater Israel would disappear of their own, just as would the Diaspora Jewry—which is plagued by constant anxiety and thus reacts aggressively. The left would then have to demand that the Jews be given a double freedom: the freedom to assimilate in their host countries under the aegis of the Enlightenment, and the freedom to emigrate to an Israel that even within the pre-1967 borders would have enough room to receive a flow of immigrants that most likely would not be particularly large.

It seems crucial to me that the left—which might possibly help to determine the future spirit and image of the Western world—stop pursuing this systematic anti-Zionism, which, for the Jews, and also in historical-objective terms, bears the repulsive features of traditional anti-Semitism.

Only a few, almost shamefully trivial insights are needed in order to comprehend this. All the young Socialists, Communists, Maoists, and Trotskyists have to do is imagine those in power telling them: "It isn't you we are combating, it is World Bolshevism. We have nothing against your stand on the left. However: you are forbidden to be teachers; you are barred from the civil service; your public gatherings will be outlawed; if you continue to form parties you will be overstepping the law." With a minimum of imagination, you need only place yourselves in this situation, and you will understand that with their anti-Zionist emotional fervor these leftists awaken aggressive Zionist reactions on the one hand and, on the other, those anti-Semitic feelings that have been dragged along through the history of the Occident and the Orient for two millennia and are latently as present today as they ever were. The left, and with a gesture of sharp rejection, must refuse to allow this anti-Semitism, now shabbily disguised as anti-Zionism, to become respectable again.

In contrast to a traditionally obstinate right, the left has no title to the aforementioned indolence of the heart. It has no title to

self-mystification or to an absurd mythology of revolution, no title to that eccentric German idealism that Thomas Mann once characterized by saying, "If it did not sound so presumptuous, one would have to say that the Nazis committed their crimes out of unworldly idealism." If the left properly understands itself, it knows that it *is a child of the Enlightenment*, of the Encyclopedists, the great French Revolution, the intellectual and poetic influence of Lessing, Heine, Börne, Moses Mendelsohn, Feuerbach. It is up to the left, today more than ever, to concur energetically with Jean-Paul Sartre, who said in an interview in the days of the October War: I know only that in this conflict 3 million people are up against 100 million. In Israel every Jew must be trembling for his life, even if he is the bravest, and with him all of the Jews in every country of the earth.—Perhaps, though, only someone who was a witness to the murderous frenzy of the Third Reich knows and comprehends this.

The person who is speaking to you here *was* a witness. He himself was touched and squeezed, as in the fairy tale of Hänsel and Gretel, not to see whether he was fat enough but, rather, if he was lean enough to be slaughtered. I appeal to your feelings, to the world's feelings, but above all, certainly, to

your intelligence, when I stress: anti-Semitism, even if it calls itself anti-Zionism, is not respectable. On the contrary, it is the indelible stain that mars the honor of civilized humanity.

Please do not regard this appeal as an address to you personally. I know, in any case, that those of you who have gathered here to open Brotherhood Week, no matter where you stand politically, are of sincere good will. Otherwise you would not have come. But since my words have a certain chance of reaching beyond our narrow circle of men and women who are in basic agreement with one another, I chose them as you have heard them. The problem of age-old anti-Semitism, appearing in the cloak of respectability and fashionable chic, goes far beyond anything that Christian-Jewish cooperation can solve. It is a matter for the world and its history. And wherever and whenever we, who are in agreement, have the possibility, even in the most modest way, to intervene with our word in the historical proceedings that are once again being conducted against the Jews, we are obliged to make ourselves heard: morally, politically, polemically, and with the emotion that befits a good cause.

Translated from the German by SIDNEY and STELLA P. ROSENFELD □

WORK AND WORKERS IN THE 1980s

Over its next few issues, Dissent will feature a series of articles on work and workers in the 1980s and beyond. Workers in America are under severe attack on at least two fronts: the Reaganauts are using the power of the state to dismantle decades of protective regulations; and, taking new initiative and courage from their friends in Washington, the corporations are accelerating the pace of automation, plant closings, and the export of jobs. Our aim in this series, therefore, is to explore the many ways American workers are coping with these renewed attacks.

We begin with a pair of articles on two of the newer trends in the workplace, the computer revolution and its implications for the future of work, and the small but growing movement for worker ownership. These and most of the other articles in the series describe the first-hand experience of workers as they confront changes in their work lives. In general we seek to present the work of authors who have had direct experience with workers on their jobs, but we will also include articles that analyze some of the major demographic trends in the labor force and the job market. Some of our future articles will document the experience of longshoremen faced with technological change on the docks, of oil and chemical workers faced with lethal threats to their health, of steelworkers confronted by economic depression in their communities, and of young black and Hispanic workers who cannot enter the primary labor force at all. — W. K. and D. B.

Shoshanah Zuboff

Problems of Symbolic Toil

How People Fare with Computer-Mediated Work

Thomas Lindstrom is a commercial airline pilot. He was selected for the job because of his intelligence, physical strength, and mental stamina—characteristics that are critical for the complex and varied decisions a pilot must make during flight time. Lately, Lindstrom's job just isn't the same. He is now required to monitor a set of computer controls that automatically makes all flight decisions. On a good flight, he shouldn't have to do a thing. Lindstrom is bored, and angry. Thousands of dollars were invested in his training, but he now is expected to baby-sit a control panel.

Our special series, "Work and Workers in the 1980s," is edited by William Kornblum and David Bensman.

Gerry Alvarez is a bill collector working in the headquarters of a large discount store chain. He has been a collector for more than ten years and takes pride in his ability to recoup cash for the company. He has learned to master various techniques for cajoling people to pay up. But lately his job just isn't the same. The firm has adopted a computer system to distribute and organize collection activities. While the system allows for a greater volume of transactions, it takes most of the skill requirements out of the job. The computer randomly distributes accounts among the collectors, and the greater volume assures that "you can't get to know any

account in depth. The computer tells you which account to work, and you can't keep an overview of your accounts because the file is automatically updated each day." Gerry wants to quit his job. He thinks the pressure is too great and the only way to get the supervisor off his back is to key in work he has not completed. He also feels that anyone can now do the job; being a "good collector" no longer makes a difference.

Linda Winthrop is a data analyst in the commercial planning department of a large bank. She spends her days accessing information from a central data bank and plugging it into various forecasting models that serve as the strategic basis for critical marketing and credit decisions. Linda does not let on but she has little or no trust in the system upon which she must depend for most of her information. There are the technical kinks—her data is sometimes mutilated or disappears entirely—yet even when things run smoothly she does not trust that all the proper calculations are performed. She keeps parallel records and often repeats calculations manually before she uses them for a report. It takes extra time, but this way she feels in control of the information.

Nellie Weymouth was a linotype operator until recently when her job was altered. Instead of working that big printing contraption and handling all the crafty judgments it required, she now works at a computer terminal where she types information into a visual display unit. As far as Nellie is concerned, the difference between hot and cold type is that "one has no blood and doesn't really need people at all." The main preoccupation she and her friends share each long night as the paper is printed is—"how can we make something go wrong? After all, the rest of the fun is mostly gone."

Tom, Gerry, Linda, and Nellie are supporting actors in a drama of national proportions. It involves the adaptation of computer-based information technology to jobs in all parts of the labor market. In some cases information systems provide technical support for a range of professional and managerial activities. In other instances, computers are applied directly to production and jobs are reformulated so

that people execute their tasks through information technology, a phenomenon I will call the "computer-mediation" of work.

There are, of course, often good reasons for firms to subject their employees to this change: increasing productivity, expanding markets, enhancing services or products, improving the management of complexity. But there are likely to be social and psychological implications that have not yet received much systematic attention. In part, this is so because of a tendency to view information technology as just another step in a long line of innovations in the workplace. But this attitude overlooks some of the most significant features of the new structure of work. Based on recent field work I have conducted in several large organizations, this essay will identify four areas where implications for the psychology of work and the quality of organizational life have emerged.

Direct Experience, Individual Judgment, and Information Technology

IT IS THE INTENT of the intellectual technology at the core of a computer system to substitute algorithms or decision rules for individual judgment. This makes it possible to formalize the skills and know-how intrinsic to a job and to integrate them into the computer program. This process is at work in the newly computerized job of the airline pilot or of the bill collector cited above. As decision rules become more explicit, they are, theoretically, subject to more deliberate planning. But the more activities are planned in advance and concretized in an automated process, the less they require actual decision-making at each stage of execution. Consequently, what was once a decision is not exactly a decision any longer. Instead, it is a working-out of information according to rules that are specified and embedded in a computer program. Managers and workers may be called upon to monitor such "decisions," as Herbert Simon has suggested.¹ But the real risk lies in the

¹ Herbert Simon, "The Consequences of Computers for Centralization and Decentralization," in *The Computer Age: A Twenty Year View*, Michael Dertouzos and Joel Moses, eds. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979).

prospect of decisions becoming increasingly analytic and insulated from any confrontation with the true complexities of the situations they are designed to govern.

This aspect of information systems can have an effect on the quality of planning at the senior management level, on the psychology of professional work, and on the job satisfaction of white-collar "production" workers. For example, when senior managers work with computer-based models of economic activity without having full access to the theoretical biases built into the program, forecasts based on such complex planning models can become self-fulfilling prophecies, dictating actions in response to rational assessments of how a diverse set of variables should interact. At the same time, a reliance on such models can limit the type of information that managers seek. As one staff analyst in a corporate planning department put it:

The sophistication of the computer model makes it the focus of the planning process. Rarely has top management thought through the issues creatively enough to critique our models. They tend to short circuit the creative envisionary process—the model becomes the only thing that happens and the vision never takes place.

In such situations thinking can become so formal that it is not related to the concrete, often messy and ambiguous situations a manager is trying to understand.

As the use of computer applications moves up the organizational hierarchy, managers and professional staff are often wary of systems that seem to encroach upon their judgment, their freedom, or the "art" of their professional assessments. For example, one bank installed an information system that could make many of the routine credit calculations for the analysts in the department. The bank's technologists saw the system as one that freed the analyst from the most mechanical aspects of the job. Six months after the system was in place, not one of the 20 analysts in the department had ever used it. They perceived it as encroaching upon an important part of their "brain" work. As one analyst explained: "I think, then I write down my calculations

directly. I know the firm and the problem. With this system, I am supposed to type into the machine and let it think. Why should I let it do my thinking for me?"

Managers and professionals often resist having their work interface with computer-based information systems for reasons involving questions of status associated with typing into computer terminals, the loss of personal secretaries, the lack of understanding of the systems' capabilities, or the fear that their contribution will come to seem less important and even dispensable. Resistance often increases if the information system is perceived to limit the professionals' freedom or to increase the measurability of their work. At present most professionals and managers function in fairly ambiguous environments. Information is imperfectly exchanged (often in corridors, washrooms, or over lunch), and there is usually considerable lag time before the quality of decisions can be assessed.

For the manager who functions in the context of a continual flow of complete information, much of this ambiguity is reduced. For example, in the marketing area of one bank, an information system was developed that could provide complete profiles of all accounts while assessing their profitability according to key corporate criteria. Top management and systems developers believed the system could serve as a constant source of feedback to account officers, helping them to manage their account activities and maximize fee-based revenues. But the marketing professionals steadily resisted utilizing the system. The flow of "perfect" information, in reducing ambiguity, was also seen as limiting their opportunities for creative decisions.

The uncertainty of limited information may lend itself to errors of judgment, but it also provides a "free space" for actions that feel inspired. This free space is fundamental to the psychology of professional work—it is the reason that most people would prefer being professionals to assembly-line workers. Account officers perceived the information system as encroaching upon a primary source of their job satisfaction. These professionals have traditionally been motivated by the

chance to display their artistry as bankers, but the "art" in their jobs is reduced as increased information organizes the context of their work.

What happens when a group of workers is suddenly made to feel powerless and undervalued because of the introduction of computer technology to their jobs? First there are the obvious problems of morale and motivation. If employees depend upon the computer system in order to accomplish their work but the system is experienced as an enemy, the quality of the work must suffer. As one office worker said, "When a person makes a mistake with a computer, to try and get that mistake corrected is so much red tape. So you tend to let it go. Maybe when they see how bad the information is, they'll give us back the jobs."

The desire to retain some control over the job can take many forms. Employees on a highly computerized newspaper printing operation took a gleeful pride in system breakdowns and looked for ways to demonstrate the inefficacy of "intelligent" equipment. Outsmarting the system became the most challenging aspect of the job. Linda Winthrop, the data analyst, sought to retain some sense of control over her job by reworking most calculations by hand. This meant that turning out a report took almost twice as long as it should. She put her situation this way: "There's a machine out there somewhere and my numbers go God knows where. . . . I don't feel that I really know the data unless I can get my hands on it, so I have to rework it manually."

Collections workers who lost control over the work process could only retrieve some sense of mastery by keying fictitious data into the system of account files. Their managers were confronted with high productivity figures that were not matched by the size of monthly revenues. As one collector put it: "People get so discouraged because the work keeps flowing into your terminal, no matter how much you finish. The only way to deal with it is to fake some work. How else can we keep our heads above water?"

Many managers' first response to this situation is to look for ways to increase control over the work process, but the more they

attempt to control the process, the more the employees will search out ways to subvert that control and gain some personal sense of mastery. Very often these subversive activities are dismissed as "resistance to change." But in many cases resistance is the only available means for employees to articulate their response to the *substance* of the changes.

Because systems planning and design can be highly centralized activities managed by a small group of experts, any single user is likely to have little or no understanding of the system's comprehensive functioning or the decision rules and normative criteria built into programs. It becomes difficult to challenge information without understanding how it was generated, especially when there are no independent experiential reference points for judging its validity. This kind of psychological dynamic insulates information from the kind of debate and confrontation that insures its quality. It also works to preserve the authority of those who actually design the system and develop the program.

The Abstraction of Work

ANOTHER FEATURE of computer-based information technology concerns the way in which it abstracts most of the work it reorganizes. Unlike industrial work, which depended upon machines that were extensions of the human body, computer-mediated work involves little in the way of physical effort. What the airline pilot, the bill collector, the data analyst, and the cold-type operator have in common is that their work consists of reading and manipulating electronic symbols. Those symbols, the language of the computer, mediate between the workers and the work they once performed directly.

This abstraction of work routines is shared by many American workers, from those who monitor the continuous automatic processes of an oil refinery to hospital nurses, bank tellers, and engineers. The center of gravity in the workplace has shifted from jobs that require bodily involvement to those that require cerebral involvement. But this increased demand for a particular form of mental effort does not mean a correlative increase in the

degree to which these jobs are interesting, varied, challenging, or promising greater opportunities. A more likely combination is that more jobs will require focused cerebral attention while nevertheless being experienced as boring and routine. We are accustomed to thinking of brain jobs as challenging and rewarding. What will be the effect if a vast range of jobs are characterized by abstraction, focused attention, and routinization?

The abstraction of work further suggests a change in the salient mode of social control at work. A key element in the productivity of the traditional manufacturing operation has been the careful control of the human body as it labored. Labor-management relations on the shop floor have been largely defined by the struggle for control over decisions regarding the placement and timing of the worker's physical efforts. Indeed, the core of Taylor and Gilbreth's genius was to develop a systematic method for recording and therefore controlling the body in time and space. White-collar work has depended upon face-to-face interaction and written communication. As a result, interpersonal behavior rather than physical discipline has been the focus of control. The greater part of the organization behavior literature can be read as the deciphering of these interpersonal norms and the consequences of their imposition. Once productive activity is organized by information technology, neither physical effort nor interpersonal conduct are very relevant to performance. Information comprehension and sustained attention may become the new standards of productivity. In this way the organization of work may come to be mirrored in the organization of attention in the workplace.

Some early reports are beginning to emerge regarding the stress built into such routine computer-mediated jobs. Swedish researchers are finding that office workers who spend most of their day at visual display units show significantly more physiological symptoms of stress, including high blood pressure and high-stress hormone levels, when compared to employees who do not interact continuously with the computer system.²

Bill collectors working with an automated collections system also spend their days in front of visual display units. When they worked manually, they had to consult various files and spend considerable amounts of time on the telephone. The computer now provides them with all the information they need. This means they need hardly move away from the screen during the entire day. Though they still spend time on the telephone, the system is programmed so that accounts pop up continuously during the day according to a programmed scoring system. This means that telephone time per account is kept to a minimum. The overall effect of this change in their working procedures is close attention to a screen full of information during the eight-hour work day. They must read and process information continuously, while the work itself is experienced as routine. The bill collectors that were interviewed complained of mental strain, fatigue, eye problems, and a variety of physical stress symptoms. One collector who had experience with the prior manual system described the difference this way: "The computer means work is more intense, though you might have accomplished something faster manually. It's as if they want us to become extensions of the computer. You don't need a memory and you don't need to think, but you do need a clear head."

Beyond a consideration of jobs that are marked by this curious combination of abstraction and routinization—what of the process of abstraction itself? How much do we understand about the unique demands that computer-induced work abstraction make upon people at any occupational level?

Two aspects of abstraction emerge frequently in discussions with workers in different occupations. One aspect involves the invisibility of many features of work when it becomes computer-mediated. Employees note that their work involves manipulating symbols, but what goes on "behind the screen" is lost to view. As one typesetter said: "I used to

² Gunn Johansson and Gunnar Aronsson, "Stress Reactions in Computerized Administrative Work," Reports from the Department of Psychology, University of Stockholm, Supplement 50, November 1980.

see the line of type as soon as it was produced. Now I type into the terminal. I don't know where those letters go or what happens to them. I don't know what the print will look like. I know somewhere they're printing a paper." A bill collector put it this way: "People lose their temper faster with the tubes. The person is just a number. Somehow when you could see all of your account cards in front of you and write down information, it didn't seem that way. You felt you knew your people, your accounts."

Invisibility as a feature of the abstraction of work can affect professionals as well. The regional auditor for a bank now receives financial information on-line from nearby branches. He no longer needs to travel to the branches, talk with people, and examine books.

In some ways it's quicker to control things, but it's more difficult to define what you want. Since there is nothing before you but numbers, more imagination is required. You have to build up in your mind the way the system works; there are no guidelines. The job has become very abstract. I may be auditing, but I don't feel like I'm auditing.

Does this quality of abstraction affect people's understanding of the work itself? One bank manager said:

Now you make an input and it's gone. People become more technical and sophisticated, but they have an inferior understanding of the banking business. New people have no idea of the manual procedures so they never see or understand the processes. People start creating programs that don't necessarily reflect the spirit of the operation.

This manager had not yet realized that the structure of familiar processes tends to become less important than the ability to reenvision tasks and functions that more fully exploit the capabilities of the new technology.

A corollary of the invisibility of work is its intangibility. Generally, when work becomes computer-mediated it no longer offers physical access to the object of work processes. For example, nurses now monitor patient information from terminals instead of visiting

patients; newspaper workers like Nellie Weymouth can no longer touch a plate of type; bill collectors no longer handle account cards. If we consider that human beings are tool-users and relate to the world through being able to touch it and act upon it, then the potential significance of intangibility as a feature of computer-mediated work takes on a sharper focus.

For example, in a branch of one bank, an on-line computer system had been installed for updating information on current accounts. Instead of making out tickets that were sent on to a key-punch center to be processed overnight, operators entered data directly into terminals and account information was immediately changed. Despite top management's persuasions to the contrary, the branch operations people insisted on continuing to make up tickets. When asked why, their first response was that they needed a backup system. Further discussion led to the following statement from the operations manager: "You need something you can put your hands on. How else can we be sure the system is correct?"

As work activities are abstracted, their meaning is altered. It is easy to find meaning in your job if you are a nurse interacting with patients, but what happens when you are expected to monitor patient information from a video screen? The meaning of the job is thinner, less accessible. As more jobs become subject to this "thinning out" of meaning, will work become less important in people's lives, or will there be a new response that challenges employers to provide more meaningful jobs?

Management Style and Labor Relations

COMPUTER SYSTEMS that are designed according to traditional negative assumptions about human motivation are likely to exacerbate any existing, underlying organizational problem. For example, the system that automated collections activities was designed to substitute the computer for human judgment as much as possible. This increases the substitution of labor while trivializing most of the collectors' activities. When managers were asked why the system was designed that way, the response was: "We tried to put Bill

Smith's brain into the computer." Bill Smith had managed collections for 30 years. While he knew more about the collections process than anyone else, he also believed that "people don't want to work anymore. People think that today's society owes them something. They come to their jobs, but they are not working." This attitude was designed into the system along with his specific knowledge about the job.

The design of an information system—especially where office production activities are concerned—can communicate a management style in other ways. For example, information technology can assimilate many ordinary supervisory functions. The dreams of industrial engineers to create a perfectly timed and rationalized set of activities have always been only imperfectly realized. Face-to-face supervision can only occur on a partial basis, and workers usually find ways to pace their own activities so that standards can be met at a reasonable pace. But the computerization of work can build the industrial engineer's presence into all real-time activities. Work accomplished through the medium of video terminals or other intelligent equipment can be recorded on a second-by-second basis. Printouts or other immediate forms of visual access to employee output are available to supervisors and managers, thus limiting their dependence on face-to-face supervision but potentially increasing the amount of surveillance that can occur.

The immediacy of access to information and consequent increase in the volume of transactions or operations that can take place also has the effect of compressing time and altering the rhythm of work. While people were once satisfied if the response from a computer system was forthcoming in 24 hours, those who work with them are now impatient if information takes more than five seconds to appear. For clerical workers who find their workload increasing with the introduction of computer technology, system failures or slow response times are considered unjust and are met with anxiety. Their output now depends on the timely and reliable functioning of the system.

These new time pressures extend up and

down the managerial ladder. Once a manager becomes accustomed to receiving in two hours a report that once took two days to compile, any delay is considered intolerable. This speed of access, retrieval, and information processing is the key to improving the productivity of the office. It is also transforming the social life of the workplace; for the compression of time means that work can become more pressured and demanding once it has been reorganized by "labor-saving" automation.

Conversion to computer-based work procedures can have a profound, and often unintended, effect on the quality of social life at the workplace. For example, employees in the commercial credit office of one bank complained of the isolation demanded by the new computer-mediated work procedures. A video display unit replaced co-workers as the principal focus of interaction. Instead of approaching a supervisor or fellow employee for information or clarification, it was now only necessary to inquire into the terminal.

Where there are unionized employees, growing militancy toward these forms of hidden computer supervision has already forced some organizations to rethink the design of their computer systems. For example, in the Volvo plant in Kalmar, Sweden, designed to enhance "the quality of work life," a computer system was installed to monitor assembly operations. The computer was programmed to flash a red light signalling a quality-control problem. The workers protested the red light, insisting that the supervisory function be returned to a foreman. They preferred to answer to a human being with whom they could interact, negotiate, discuss, argue, and explain, rather than to a computer whose only means of "communication" is unilateral.³

Workers in the Bell system have complained about being strictly monitored by computer technology. Employees reacted against what they saw as the erosion of the old "Ma Bell" familial culture, and they organized a Job Pressures Day to protest the oversupervision, stress, and discipline imposed in large measure by the computer sys-

³ International Federation of Automation Control, Newsletter #6, September 1978.

tem. The Communications Workers of America (CWA) claim that the stress produced by continual computer surveillance represents a qualitatively new kind of workplace problem and will require new labor strategies. In recent contract negotiations between AT&T and the CWA, a new quality of work life agreement establishes labor-management committees to discuss technological change.

In general, these issues are likely to affect collective bargaining by increasing the territory in which formal, legally binding agreements become necessary. Manufacturing workers could always count on being able to negotiate with foremen for a certain amount of flexibility on the job. Assembly-line workers might agree to a heightened pace in the morning in return for a more relaxed pace

during the afternoon; or it might be possible to speed up and produce the quota in 45 minutes, saving 10 minutes in which to drink coffee and relax. Such informal arrangements do not detract from actual production but serve to humanize the job and create some sense of control over the work tasks. When work activities are monitored and controlled by the computer, such casual arrangements become impossible. Supervisors in the office or foremen on the shop floor are as subject to the computer as are their subordinates.

These developments might result in demands for formal arrangements as a part of collective bargaining agreements where an informal understanding once sufficed, extending the legitimate territory of collective

DAVID NEWMAN

Work & Technology in Telephone

In late 1971 and early 1972, for over seven months, 38,000 craft and clerical employees of New York Telephone struck in defiance of our employer and our national union, the Communication Workers of America. The strike was the culmination of a struggle to assert our collective bargaining power and rights against AT&T, then and now the largest corporation in the world. The strike was also a reflection of the confidence we had in the skill, autonomy, and initiative we exercised in our work. We lost the strike, and in the past decade we have also lost a good deal of our pride, confidence, skills, autonomy, jobs, and strength as unionists. One factor in this change is a reorganization of the work process, especially through the introduction of new technology. Let's take a look at some of the technological changes now taking place in telephone. The heart of the telecommunications network is the switching system. It is the largest area of capital investment, probably accounting for about one third of AT&T's fixed assets. The switching system is essentially the means by which a call is channeled on its way in response to the digits dialed. The newest version is electronic switching, ESS, which adapts computerization to call switching and results in greatly increased capacity, simplified maintenance, and a versatility not found in previous switching systems. ESS is characterized by microelectronic tech-

nology, which has the potential to integrate digital switching and digital transmission with stored program (software) control. It is the wave of the future—the framework into which all telecommunications services can be fitted. First introduced in 1965, ESS equipment today processes well over 50 percent of U.S. subscribers' calls, and conversion is expected to be complete by the year 2000. In 1976, ESS was adapted to long-distance call switching; coverage is expected to reach 50 percent in four years.

Are changes in our jobs inherent in the new technology? Certainly new equipment often engenders new skill requirements, and many of the changes that telephone workers have experienced may be traced to the new equipment itself. But the fundamental changes that we are now experiencing are not inherent in the new technology itself—they are a result of how management uses the new technology.

ESS replaces the older mechanical and electromechanical switching systems—panel, Number One and Number Five crossbar. Just as the introduction of each previous system was accompanied by changes in workforce levels and skill requirements, ESS involves similar changes. Yet ESS, unlike previous systems, offers new and radically different options that the company uses to alter both the relationship of craft workers to management and to each other, and not only the type required but the level of skills. To illustrate: The earlier ESS offices in the late 1960s and 1970s were usually staffed by 8 to 15 switching equipment technicians, down from much larger workforces in panel and crossbar offices serving an equal number of subscribers.

bargaining. As more office and professional jobs are made subject to the changes entailed by computer technology, people who valued white-collar jobs because of the more easy-going working conditions they offered (in which individual productivity was imperfectly measured) will experience automation-induced pressures similar to those that symbolized the most strenuous industrial work. Unless attention is paid to the psychological dimensions of computer-mediated work, individuals are likely to channel their energy into various forms of resistance—not merely resistance to change, but resistance to the substantive differences they experience on the job.

Where workers are not organized, their responses to the built-in pressures of comput-

er surveillance and increased time pressures have fewer constructive outlets. If they cannot register their protest as a grievance, they will tend instead to withdraw their concern from the quality of their work or seek covert ways in which to sabotage work activities. Their discontent and feelings of powerlessness will hasten the unionization of the white-collar labor force. An office worker in a large insurance company articulated her frustration and sense of hopelessness this way:

I used to love my work but now I come in with a defeatist attitude. . . . [The computer is] just an inanimate object that stands on your desk and you have to fight it every single day. And the tube is gonna tally what you've worked every minute. I like to feel that I have a chance but with the tubes you don't have a chance."

Working in ESS at that time entailed learning new skills—disregarding previously acquired electromechanical experience and adapting to computers and electronics. It is also true that some areas of skill and knowledge that had been utilized by switching technicians in prior systems did have their equivalents in ESS and that these were programmed into the machine rather than retained by the workers.

Similar processes had occurred in the changes from panel to Number One crossbar to Number Five crossbar. What differentiates ESS is the additional options it offers to management. The ESS technology of 1981 is essentially identical to the ESS technology of 1971. Yet even those ESS offices that have been operating since that time with no major equipment or program changes are often down to two or three workers. Some have only one and some are unstaffed. In 1971, a switching technician could reasonably expect to become familiar with and responsible for all aspects of the switching process. That is unlikely today. How has this happened?

One ESS option that management chooses to exercise is its capability for remote monitoring and maintenance functions. In a centralized location in lower Manhattan, the company has established an Automated Switching Control Center (ASCC). Fewer workers are now needed in the central offices (COs), and workers in the control center can now monitor more than one CO at a time. The goal is to unstaff all COs, and to dispatch switching equipment technicians as need arises. The ASCC becomes the new workplace geographically separated from the equipment itself and with an entirely new and

qualitatively different work process. Working in the control center essentially consists of sitting in a clerical office in front of one or more video display terminals (VDTs), watching for alarms and trouble reports and utilizing the VDT to perform certain work operations in a central office that may be miles away. This is a big change for most craft workers.

Working in the control center entails a loss of physical mobility and means being restricted to a much smaller work area (one desk) under the eyes of management every minute of the day, and being paced by a machine. Moreover, workers are isolated. Not only do they communicate with machines rather than people, but management has surrounded each VDT work station with plexiglass so that conversation with a fellow worker only four feet away is impossible.

As if these working conditions were not bad enough in human terms, they also endanger worker safety and health. Close supervision, machine-paced work, restrictions on our ability to walk and talk produce anxiety and stress. In addition, working on VDTs may cause cataracts, eyestrain, dizziness, fatigue, and headaches.

It could work differently. The control center could be used for backup assistance only. VDTs and their associated computer linkages could be decentralized. If we had one in each central office, they would be valuable tools, helping us diagnose problems so that we could devise solutions. But since this conflicts with management's goal of centralizing knowledge and authority, the new technology decreases our skill level, rather than upgrades it. □

Management and the Nature of Organizations

AS COMPUTER-BASED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY presents important challenges to the traditional psychology of work, it holds the potential for changing some fundamental definitions of management and organization. The industrial organization as a collective enterprise came into existence in part because it was necessary to bring people together around a central energy source that fueled the means of production. When the means of production become dependent on electronic technology and information flows, it is no longer inevitable that labor be collective and synchronous. New forms of organizational arrangements will become possible as work can be performed in the home or on the road—as long as a terminal and communications link are available.

As these developments overtake us, they will make it necessary to rethink basic conceptions of the nature of organization and management. What is an organization if people do not have to come face-to-face in order to accomplish their work? Does the organization itself become an abstraction? What happens to the shared purpose and commitment of members if their face-to-face interaction is reduced? Similarly, how should an “abstract” organization be managed? The tradition of supervision and control that grew up with the industrial enterprise depends on personal contact. If work can be accomplished remotely, then not only will managers face the prospect of managing people they do not see, but they themselves will be able to accomplish many of their managing activities from afar.

The meaning of “accomplishing a task” also undergoes a fundamental change. The computer-mediation of work translates many occupational activities (from airline piloting to building cars) into abstract monitoring routines, thus washing away the distinctive features of many job-related skills. This may limit the traditional identification with occupational roles. By increasing the transferability of on-the-job skills, individual loyalty and commitment to the organization may be diminished, as non-work activities provide

greater opportunity for individual development and expression.

If some of the present trends in the design of computer-mediated work systems continue, it is likely that they will undermine parallel efforts at improving the quality of the workplace. If advanced computer-based systems are designed in ways that simply replicate all of the past features of industrial work (fragmentation, repetitiveness, low choice, little or no control), organizations can look forward to a radical separation of a small managerial elite, whose work requires some original thought, from the vast majority of jobholders whose tasks are computer-mediated and highly rationalized.

Work has come a long way since Marx defined labor as a process in which man “opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature’s productions in a form adapted to his own wants. . . .”

The tradition of scholarship that has tried to make sense of the relationships between productive activity, social organization, and psychological meaning will have to assimilate the fact that by the year 2000, less than 20 years from now, work will be typically characterized as the electronic manipulation of symbols. The image of the assembly line that has served the popular and the scholarly imagination so well is no longer a stereotype of the workplace. Carting, hauling, lugging, chopping, hewing, digging—the transformation of nature with our shoulders, backs, arms, and legs—are activities in which very few of us will participate.

As the skills we possess in white-collar and professional occupations become more abstract and thus similar to one another, it will become increasingly difficult for us to think how to respond to the question, “What do I do?” It will take some penetrating observation and analysis to develop an understanding of the peculiar inner tensions of a society in which “work” has vanished. And just as the labor process becomes more abstract, so will the relations of power that bind employees and managers. When supervision is built into the computer system and labor does not pro-

duce sweat, the political dimension of work is not experienced with great force.

The consequences of computer-mediated work will not be restricted to the workplace. Just as industrial technology has cut the pattern for the social organization and role definitions of industrial and nonindustrial occupations alike, computer-based information technology will play a critical role in shaping the social construction of reality and in engendering new forms of behavior in the coming decades. As the technology opens up new possibilities for patterns of work behavior, it will also mean that categories that have long defined our social life, such as the division of work and leisure time and accepted boundaries of private and public behavior, will be altered. In the midst of such change, groups that are well organized, informed, and awake will face an opportunity to help fashion modes of collective behavior that suit their needs.

Perhaps any discussion of computer-mediated work must inevitably come around to the question of job loss. Computer technology has created new industries and new careers. It has opened up opportunities for older industries to expand, particularly those

that are service-related. Yet there should be no confusion about the fact that individual firms undertake massive computer-based automation projects with labor force reduction as a primary goal. In this endeavor managers are carrying out their mandate to maximize efficiency and productivity—a mandate that has inherited force from the pressures of international competition. Though there is considerable concern both within the private sector and among its observers as to the potential impact of such automation on national employment levels, there are no effective political mechanisms for cogent national planning regarding job creation or destruction. Public policy concerning job creation has played a catch-up game, tagging along after the random fallout produced by economic expedience and technological seduction. As long as the labor market is able to expand as it did during the 1970s, it is unlikely that national planning will be seriously considered. But if the labor market cannot replenish jobs at appropriate skill levels, those whose business it is to think about the well-being of the society as a whole will have to face the prickly question of how to keep us all in jobs. □

Susan Sklar

An Experiment in Worker Ownership

Across the railroad tracks, down a ways from Russ's Truck Wash and Kleen-Maid Enriched Bread, around the corner from several taverns, the barber shop, and the local massage parlor, stand over a hundred multi-storied, antiquated brick-factory buildings. The majority of them, though constructed in the 1930s and '40s and meagerly decorated with the sort of Gothic ornaments often found on old school buildings, are still solid.

Inside, in the main section of the plant, in the part referred to as "the kill," workers on the first shift move to the deafening sound of conveyor belts, pulleys, steaming and torching machines. This noise blocks out most of the squealing and shrieking of hogs, stunned, one by one, by 1,200 volts of electricity. Then the 200-pound gilts and barrows are "stuck," that is, their throats are slit, by a worker wearing protective earphones. Blood streams

from throats, from snouts. The carcasses are scalded, dehaired, hung from the ceiling rails on steel hooks, then scraped for excess hair. Workers in white coats and hardhats slice, sort, and trim, producing daily thousands of pounds of ham, sausage, bacon, and luncheon meat.

This is the Rath Pork Packing Company of Waterloo, Iowa, the setting of one of the newest experiments in worker democracy.

The workers at Rath are buying their company, which is not all that unusual. A 1977 report by the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan estimated that more than 1,000 firms in the U.S. have some form of direct worker stock ownership. But the term "worker ownership" is meaningless when applied to some of these firms. Worker equity in these companies is often less than 20 percent. The term is better used to describe the approximately 100 firms in the U.S. where workers have at least 51 percent controlling interest in the company. Of these "majority-owned" firms, only 60 percent pass on voting rights to their workers. What is significant about Rath is that in this majority-owned plant workers can vote their shares, and the new corporation is experimenting with the most democratic way of voting those shares: one worker one vote, regardless of how many shares a person has purchased.

Rath was founded in 1891 by cousins, with an original investment of \$25,000 and only 22 employees. By the 1940s it had grown to be the largest and most modern packinghouse in the world: with over 2 million square feet for plant space and a slaughtering capacity of 12,000 animals per day. It originally had also handled beef and sheep slaughtering operations but was forced out of those markets in the '50s, when large conglomerates with better access to quick cash started leading the competition. By the mid-'60s Rath had incurred heavy financial losses. Interest rates were up, much of the plant's machinery was outdated, and fierce competitive bidding in the industry decreased the availability of hogs, forcing pork prices up and thereby reducing demand. These shifts in the industry were upsetting an already delicate balance.

Pork packing had traditionally been a low-margin business: hog prices were unregulated and determined hourly by competition. Workers at Rath, confident for so many years, were beginning to wonder if management could handle the new market.

By the end of the '70s the company had lost over \$20 million. In addition to industry pressures, Rath's huge operation costs had been exacerbated because the plant was only operating at partial capacity. And an average employee age of 53 had been forcing unmanageable pension and hospitalization payments to soar.

In 1978, when the company was about to be sold to a private investor, the workers made a counterproposal that was eventually accepted. If Rath had gone under in 1978, it would have meant the loss of over 2,200 jobs with a local annual payroll of \$35 million. Given the standard "ripple effect," that would have meant a possible loss of anywhere from 6,000 to 9,000 jobs in Black Hawk County.

The idea to go worker-owned came from Lyle Taylor, the lumbering five-foot nine, 270-pound president of Local 46 of the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union who represented the company's 1,700 union members. Taylor—a Rath employee for 28 years and the local's president for 12 years—knew the books, and had seen over the years what he judged to be gross mismanagement. He had stood by and watched banks making money off Rath's misfortunes. In recent years one bank had loaned Rath money to get back on its feet and once it had, they'd sold their stock options for double what they'd paid. Taylor says: "The bankers ended up looking like the good guys when the workers are what really turned that thing around. . . . I had always put in the back of my computer that this would never happen to us again."

Taylor had connections. He had run twice for Congress, in 1970 and '72. U.S. Senator John Culver and former Senator Dick Clark were his friends. And Taylor had a sidekick just as devoted to the workers as he: Chief Union Steward Chuck Mueller, a good-natured, 53-year-old native of Waterloo.

Mueller had been at Rath since 1945, starting in the smoked meats department, then moving to the powerhouse; he had assumed his current full-time union position two years ago. When these two learned that Rath was planning to sell the company to an investor who would cut workers' (not manager's) salaries, a sizable part of their benefits, and cancel a chunk of the union's Master Wage Agreement, wheels started spinning in their minds. If the workers were going to be making the sacrifices, they ought to be reaping some of the rewards.

Taylor and Mueller had this outlandish idea that the workers should take over the company, and they knew that, for a solid basis, they would have to do plenty of research by themselves, with the company bucking them all the way. As Mueller puts it with his characteristic grin, "You don't find too many in top management who are sympathetic to the idea of the monkeys running the zoo." So Taylor began to think:

The only thing the union can do to protect its people is threaten to strike. [But] you can't strike a dead horse. At that time, a strike of two or three weeks would have sent the company into bankruptcy, and the union would have gotten the blame. . . . I had to find some mechanism . . . that would get me more power than a strike and be safer for the people.

Taylor made phone calls. He contacted Lyn Feekin of the University of Iowa's Labor Education Center, who contacted Randy Barber of the People's Business Commission in Washington. When Barber hooked them up with William Foote Whyte of Cornell University's School of Labor and Industrial Relations, sparks started to fly. Whyte and his colleagues, Professors Tove Hammer and Bob Stern, had been following experiments in worker ownership for years. Whyte supplied encouragement and a packet of materials. Then Hammer and Stern met with the union leaders and offered them assistance, including information on various legal options and on lawyers they might turn to for the project. They put Taylor and Mueller in touch with Joseph Blasi of the Harvard University Project for Kibbutz Studies and with Corey Rosen of the National Center for

Employee Ownership, who both were developing worker ownership legislation. Now Taylor and Mueller were on their way.

Iowa is still the hog center of the world. Last year it not only led the other states in the production of pork, but of corn and soybeans as well. Two out of three Iowans still make their living directly or indirectly from farming. But the old family farm is disappearing. With today's advances in farming techniques and the use of huge equipment, it now takes an average of 300 acres to provide a living for a family. Displaced farmers have been migrating for years to cities in order to find jobs at one of the state's numerous plants (135 of the nation's top 500 corporations have plants in Iowa). One such city is Waterloo.

Waterloo, whose original name was "Prairie Rapids Crossing," exudes a sense of the 1950s. On its West Side you have both neatly laid-out middle-class frame houses and the luxurious homes of wealthy Prospect Avenue. Poor people and members of the good-sized black population live on the East or North Side. Blacks and whites keep pretty much to their own sections; interaction is not all that good, although hardly anybody now mentions the race riot of 1968.

Waterloo and neighboring Cedar Falls have a total population of 112,000. These two cities constitute what is known as the "Metropolitan Area." Waterloo's sizable downtown area is dying, for there is the stronger draw of the area's two shopping malls. Yet the city is thriving mostly because of the three John Deere plants in the area, which are employing a work force of over 12,000. With the increased demands of the international market for mechanized farming equipment, Deere's business is booming, allowing the company to offer its employees the highest salaries in the area.

Waterloo is a city with 91 churches, and there's a good chance that the first person you meet when you move into town will ask you which congregation you belong to. Bowling is a popular sport. Although there is a local symphony orchestra and a community playhouse, most of the area's cultural activities spring from the University of Northern Iowa

in Cedar Falls. Iowa State is in nearby Ames and the University of Iowa, the largest and most prestigious in the state, is in Iowa City, a two-hour drive away. But Waterloo seems strangely untouched by these educational facilities. Although Iowa has ranked highest in education among our states for 25 years, Gregg Cunningham, an environmental consultant who grew up in Waterloo, complains that the city's residents don't read much. He claims, "You will sell more "Beta Maxes and triple X movies . . . in this town than you will ever sell books."

II

Opposite the Rath plant's front, on the other side of Sycamore Street, is the square, brick union hall, where Lyle Taylor and Chuck Mueller have their offices. Like many other plants of its size and duration, Rath has had a long history of skirmishes between labor and management, peaking in 1948 when a union man was shot by a scab during a strike.

Although Lyle Taylor is grateful that part of Rath's strike history is almost forgotten, he believes he got his training from the union's leaders of that period. "I came in '53, see, so I wasn't far behind." He views Local 46 as an active union that will still play a major role in the new corporation. Chuck Mueller agrees with him. Mueller too has ideas about the union's future role:

My picture of the union in all of this is to watch out for the individual. Because, there's always one guy that's got a grievance that everybody else couldn't care less about. So he's gotta have some protection; and the union is the only thing I see will do it. . . . A personnel director could do it, but I haven't seen many of 'em who will. They won't buck the corporation for one guy.

Taylor and Mueller also want to stay a part of the international union in order to receive its continuing support. In return for any assistance the international can provide, Local 46 will maintain the national pattern, matching other industry salaries according to the Master Contract.

But not all the workers support the union whole-heartedly. Though most would agree

that without it they would now be jobless, some can't help feel that the union was in part responsible for the original company's demise. Russ McPhail, a 52-year-old worker from the "kill," sees it that way. Sitting in the plant cafeteria over a plate of ham hocks and beans, he explains:

From 1948 until 1964 we had financial troubles. But the union talked like they didn't realize that the company was going downhill. . . . They wanted to get their full wage increases and full benefits. . . . If the company wanted to change something and the union didn't want to, they would fight until the company would have to give in. . . . I believe in the union—but I believe in responsible union. If you don't have a healthy company and they go broke, you don't have no union.

Chuck Mueller agrees that the union may have something to learn about managing a company, now that the tables are turned. He smiles and says, "We never thought about that before . . . management's role. We were like old Sam Gompers: 'What do you want?' 'More.'" It is clear to everyone involved in this new experiment that it's time to end the historic antagonism between the two sides. But as one worker puts it, "there's still a wall that will have to be scaled because it's been there for so many years. . . . And you don't knock a thing like that down overnight."

Most managers are still threatened by the idea of workers taking over. They fear for their jobs and don't take much to the cockiness of those they view as their adversaries. Chuck Mueller describes the attitude of some of the workers—at least in the beginning—when he says, "Of course we haven't helped matters any. We got guys running around saying, to the supervisor, 'you knock it off or we're gonna fire you.'"

But there haven't been any mass firings. Although some managers have left voluntarily most of them remain, and the new board of directors—11 out of 17 of its members are union appointed—is finding that it's not an easy task to replace the managers. In some cases, managers actually earn less than workers, though they have more responsibilities. As one union board member put it, "When

you fire one manager, there's no guarantee that you're gonna find a better one to replace him."

But there is a bright spot on the horizon. After almost two years of searching, the company has succeeded in locating a new chief executive officer to replace the outgoing one. He is Herbert Epstein, a former chairman of the board of the Armada Corporation—a rendering and high-resistance metal conglomerate operating out of Detroit. At the age of 53 Epstein is a veteran of industry but also an enthusiast about the worker ownership experiment at Rath. Epstein entered his new office last May, and he has been making some of the long needed changes.

But both Taylor and Mueller emphasize that even with a new chief executive officer and board, there will still be a place for the union. As Mueller puts it: "The resources of the union can still be used. A forum of ideas is better in the union hall than it is at a stockholder's meeting. We have better concerted action through the union."

It took 16 months to develop worker ownership at Rath. Local 46 officials presented a plan for gaining the needed capital to buy shares of stock by workers taking temporary pay and benefit cuts, and then putting that money into an escrow fund. By June 1980, when the stockholders and employees had approved the plan, the fund had accumulated \$8 million. These funds were used as matching money to secure a crucial \$4.6 million HUD Urban Development Action Grant loan, which was desperately needed to modernize the Waterloo facilities. One of the plan's conditions was that the workers receive the immediate power to appoint a majority of the members of the board. A group named the Black Hawk County Economic Development Committee—which consisted of the Black Hawk County board of supervisors, members of the Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, and the Farm Bureau, the Iowa State employment agency, and of the mayors of Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Hudson—worked with the union leaders to develop a plan to help save Rath. The union sought legal assistance to create a trust, but because of a number of bureaucratic intricacies the plan

was refused approval by the Department of Labor. This caused the workers to explore other options, and eventually led to their present plan: the Employee Stock Ownership Plan or ESOP, which went into effect January 1, 1980.

ESOP was a vehicle created in the early '70s as part of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, which defined employee ownership trusts as pension funds eligible to receive two tax breaks: (1) the company's contributions of stock or money to the trust could be deducted from its federal income taxes; (2) workers' contributions to the trust were not viewed as current taxable income since they were deferred. Originally, ESOP had not been viewed as an option since it had been a way of manipulating workers. It was a simple matter for smart lawyers and business people to use ESOP as a neat little scheme for a company to secure cheap capital by first using the workers and then denying them voting rights.

But the union leaders managed to find a way to get ESOP to work for them. They chose for their lawyer Jack Curtis, the man who initially had designed the ESOP legislation for Senator Russell Long. As part of the ESOP, workers were able to choose the trustees of their stock trust, who would then vote their shares as a block according to the workers' directions. In return for the workers' equity capital the union was empowered to name the majority of the members of Rath's board of directors. It is a varied board, consisting of a former president of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, a university professor, a black high school principal, former Senator Clark, three workers from various departments at Rath, and several others.

Rath has yet to solve one critical problem with its ESOP that is crucial to the company's long-term survival as a worker-owned operation. Rath must design a legal vehicle to put back the shares of the workers who leave the firm or it will die; otherwise, as a publicly traded company, it is leaving itself open to unsympathetic individuals who may try to gain controlling interest. There are examples in other plants of workers uncommitted to

economic democracy selling their shares once the company has become successful.

III
When workers are asked if worker ownership is socialism, the answer is a unanimous and vehement "no." Elmer Johnson, a 55-year-old worker, likes to think of it this way: Rath is a business; business is part of capitalism. He says, "We're working the same way; we're no different; we just gave some things up." By far the most typical worker viewpoint of worker ownership at Rath is that it was simply a last resort to save jobs. It was not seen as something weird or radical. Initial response to the plan was overwhelmingly positive.

But two years have passed since the plan was started, and many workers are feeling that the returns have been too few and too slow in coming. Employees, with the exception of managers (who may purchase stock voluntarily, 70 out of 300 have), are currently purchasing 10 shares of stock a week from their salaries at \$2 a share. They have temporarily deferred half of their vacation and holiday pay and the first three days of their sick pay. Many of them are beginning to wonder if they'll ever get their money back. Although the company showed initial profits at the end of fiscal year 1980, it lost money in all four quarters of fiscal '81, which ended in October.

Laura Lobeck, a 48-year-old secretary who's worked at Rath since she was 18, says sometimes the suspense is too much. When profits are up she feels elated; when they're down, she's depressed. Both she and her co-worker, 49-year-old billing clerk Bonnie Smith, admit that they may be too impatient. But, says Smith, "It's been so many years . . . since things were right. You want to see it so badly; then when it doesn't come, you give up."

Both Lobeck and Smith are anxious to know how their money's actually being spent and what good it's done so far. They want to know if their deferrals are helping or if the company is in so much financial trouble that it's no use plodding on. They wish there would be more communication from the

union leaders about the actual state of affairs. Still, people are hoping it will all work out. Says Smith: "If the next [union] contract came up and they said, 'we're doing better—we're at least going to give back your three weeks' vacation,' . . . you've got something back for what you've put in."

Norma Orum, an office worker whose husband Manley is a manager, believes that since the plan was instituted there has been a more positive attitude. She describes it as a spirit of "onward and upward." The old plant, she feels, had nothing to offer new people. Now at least new employees can hope for some kind of future. More new people are hired every month and the average age of Rath employees has dropped to 48. Orum says she no longer hears the complaints she heard when the plan was first introduced; she feels that people now are more used to the idea. Her views are echoed by Mildred Boyenga, chief steward of Local 1278 of the Office Workers' Union (of which there are about 60 members who cooperate with Local 46), who adds: "You look for things that will make your job better—better ways of doing it. Everybody looks for ways that will save money and utilize time. You feel like you're more a part of it."

Lyle Taylor says that if there were 20 or 30 more people around who knew all the facts, there would be fewer complaints and rumors. But he is pleased with the new company's track record so far. In 1978 a turnaround study published by a consulting firm projected that Rath would lose money for five years in a row and would have to waive pension payments for five years. Well, in 1980 Rath made a small profit and it was able to make one pension payment. And even though they deferred most of their pension-fund payments last fall, Taylor figures, they're ahead of where the pros said they would be. Referring to his many critics, Taylor says:

They would like to have their deferrals back, all their stock money back . . . and still have their jobs. What they can't seem to understand is . . . we were in bankruptcy; it was a matter of just a few weeks. . . . They don't believe that. A lot of people believe there's two sets of books [and] "Lyle Taylor's getting rich off this deal."

Taylor doesn't have time to stop all the gossip and occasional downright lies that sometimes filter back to him. His overriding concern is "doing as much as I can for my people." He's said that he's had to have a pretty thick skin to weather all the complaints. "It's a little bit," he says, "like having your kid say he hates you and still letting him sit at the table with you."

In one instance plain bad luck was the reason for slow change at Rath. In 1979 the union leaders had two candidates picked out to come and serve as the company's chief executive officers. The first man was killed in a plane accident, and the company didn't want the next man, so the union had to wait until they got a majority of the board members to vote him in. As Mueller tells it, "After we got that done, Lyle called the man's home to tell him, 'O.K., you can come in now,' and his son said, 'He passed away two weeks ago.'" But perhaps the most obvious reason why changes have been so slow is that as of December 1981, the workers own only 35 percent of the stock. They will not gain the 60 percent necessary for full control until March or April 1982.

But if Earl Murray, one of the union-appointed "worker" board members is accurate in his assessment, things are looking up for Rath:

I think we've made a lot of progress that can't be told to the public. If we told everything we've been doing in the board room—restructuring and things like that—our competitors would know. . . . So even though people in the plant say . . . "we see no change," we *are* making progress.

Consultants Chris Meek of Cornell and Warner Woodworth of Brigham Young University, working with William Foote Whyte, have introduced a series of innovative structures designed to teach workers and managers basic problem-solving techniques. A steering committee, consisting of five management and five union representatives, is alternately chaired by Chuck Mueller and John Lambert, vice-president in charge of sales and marketing. It meets monthly to discuss company problems and to assess market trends. And groups called Action Research Teams

(ARTs) have been created to solve problems directly on the shop floor.

Whyte, Meek, and Woodworth were influenced by a Japanese structure called the Quality Control Circle,* in which groups of workers, often without supervision, worked together to solve quality and productivity problems. Management provided training in such areas as statistical research, but the group mainly studied and discussed problems. Chris Meek had worked with the Jamestown Labor Management Committee, which had instituted a very active program of cooperative problem-solving through communitywide programs and skills training. Both the Quality Control Circle and the Jamestown Committee had evolved out of a long history of U.S. research in worker participation going back as far as the 1940s.

Now seven Action Research Teams are running, but within them there may be as many as 10 mini-teams. The amount of time an ART meets varies. In the beginning it may meet weekly but later, when its only function is to report back to the company, it may meet for only 10 or 15 minutes at a time. The meetings are usually co-chaired by one member of management and one of the union, who may be appointed or elected, sometimes on a weekly basis. The size of each group varies from five to ten members. The topics of discussion are determined by the department and the group's individual personality. According to Kate Squires, a 30-year-old intern from Cornell's Labor Studies Department, the goal of the researchers is "to teach the workers and managers the little tricks of how to deal with conflict." She adds, "Once they learn these tricks, they run the meetings themselves." She explains that ARTs have a circular structure. First group members choose their priorities, then they pick the solutions they want, based on their needs and definitions. Results are fed back into the group. If the consultants do an analysis, that information too is fed back into the group.

So far, the results of the ARTs have been

* The Japanese added the idea of worker participation, in the 1950s, to American innovations in quality control management. Today in Japan, one out of every eight workers is involved in these Quality Control Circles.

limited but dramatic. In the sliced bacon department, where one of the first ARTs was started, productivity went up from 65 to 110 percent. With such encouraging statistics, many managers who originally resisted the idea are slowly warming up to it. Chuck Mueller reports, "We've had people come over and say, 'when are you going to start that in our department? I've got ideas. I want to get them out.'"

Rath's success or failure will be largely determined by numbers. If hog prices doubled, if interest rates suddenly soared, the company would be in big trouble. For the moment, though, things are relatively stable. Although the financial picture isn't the rosiest, the company is in the midst of making important improvements that will better the odds of its survival. A HUD grant to the city of Waterloo and loaned to the company at 3 percent interest is financing the construction of a new smoke house. This will increase the firm's yield of smoked meat; and since Rath's reputation depends to a good extent on its bacon, it can only help. A fresh pork process that will seal the meat in a new kind of package, improving its shelf life, was developed last April. New machinery has been installed and more is on its way. There has been a change in the basic layout of several departments. There has been more advertising. New people are being hired, which will continue to lower the average age.

But regardless of whether or not Rath survives, it is already a model that other firms can refer to in the future. First, it was saved before bankruptcy so that complex litigation was bypassed and the still functioning company's resources could be salvaged. Second, the effort to save Rath was initiated by union members, who provided natural leadership and served as a new kind of collective bargaining unit. Third, Rath's plan gave workers voting rights according to the principle that all voters are equal, regardless of their equity. Fourth, and perhaps most important, Cornell University's intervention introduced a means for workers and managers to reorient themselves, through the Joint Steering Committee and the Action Research Teams. Para-

doxically, worker participation in decision-making and "Quality of Work Life Improvement Programs" known as QWL, have up until now been located in larger corporations with the most concentrated ownership. In the past, unions have been suspicious of these programs because they have often been instituted under the guise of heightening job satisfaction when the real goal was to increase plant profitability. The real future for these new approaches lies in resolving this contradiction and combining QWL and profit-making in a way that does not manipulate the workers.

In the current economy where the incidence of plant closing is drastically increasing, larger firms may look to worker participation. At Sears Roebuck, the nation's largest retailer, 400,000 workers with voting rights own 20 percent of the firm. Although it has been scantily reported by the press, the "Chrysler Loan Guarantee Act," signed into law in 1980, created an ESOP for the Chrysler Corporation that will give 15-20 percent of the voting stock of that company to the members of the UAW. In addition to its seat on the board of directors, the UAW is talking about organizing its 125,000 member-shareholders as a voting block and experimenting with some forms of worker participation in management.

Support for worker ownership has grown in recent years. From 1976 to 1980, many congressional committees conducted extensive hearings to determine whether the loans and loan-guarantee programs extended to business by government should also be made available to worker-owned firms. Most agencies were wary of worker participation and had internal policies preventing such loans. With the support of such liberals as Kennedy, McGovern, and Long, and conservatives as Hatch, Hayakawa, and Goldwater, the "Small Business Employee Ownership Act" was signed into law by President Carter on July 3, 1980. It makes available all of the Small Business Administration's loans and loan-guarantee programs to workers desiring to start a new company or to save a firm that would otherwise close, relocate, or be sold to outside interests.

In the future, it may be necessary for worker-owned firms to form federations that will share resources. Plants also might begin to found their own banks or joint banks that will help generate vital capital and aid them in internal growth and development.

Rath has established a credit union for its employees and is now building a housing co-op for senior citizens and workers. Chuck Mueller has visions of a worker-planned and -run day-care center at Rath, and perhaps a HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) instead of the more expensive private insurance. Once Lyle Taylor sees Rath on its feet, he wants to build a cooperative grocery chain and also a garage maintenance co-op. He only hopes his health will last. "It wears on you," he says.

Future success at Rath will depend to a great extent upon whether workers and managers can learn to work together and take advantage of their combined skills. It also remains to be seen whether or not the union will be competent and flexible enough in its new role. It is doubtful that Local 46 officials would ever call a strike that would be essentially against itself. This issue and others like it will need to be resolved in the next few years. "When it comes to negotiating," Lyle Taylor is fond of saying, "we're gonna set a mirror on the table."

Beyond Iowa, the election of Ronald Reagan has had a deterring effect on developments in worker ownership. Serious cutbacks in the Economic Development Administration have eliminated the possibility of government loans for large worker buyouts. And although the Small Business Employee Ownership loan guarantee program issued its regulations in late September and is beginning to

review applications, only individual loan guarantees for less than \$500,000 will be granted.

The Administration has tried to destroy the National Consumer Cooperative Bank by cutting its funds and has moved to curtail loan-authority and business-development loans in the Farmers' Home Administration. Both bodies, like EDA, were becoming increasingly interested in worker ownership. But worker ownership is not dependent on the state for its initial development. The UAW is now negotiating to acquire a GM plant in New Jersey in much the same way as Rath did. And this spring a number of unions will be sponsoring a conference on worker ownership in Washington.

While Reagan has issued several letters and statements supporting employee ownership—he feels it would help to distribute wealth more evenly, thereby insuring the future of democracy—the idea has never been mentioned in his economic policies. This is most distressing since 60 percent of all new jobs are created in firms of less than 20 people. Between 1969 and 1975, the Fortune—1,000 firms created fewer than 1 percent of all new jobs in the U.S. A serious job creation policy would place a good amount of investment funds in the hands of new smaller businesses. It is ironic that the Republicans may be leading the country toward state ownership by gutting private enterprise and rebuilding the corporate state. And worker ownership may be one solution for those who are truly interested in Ronald Reagan's goals of creative entrepreneurship, increased voluntarism, and real "people" democracy. □

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Joseph Blasi in the preparation of background material for this article.

Philip M. Williams

The Rise — and Possibilities — of Britain's Social Democrats

This article continues the discussion of the politics and problems of the British democratic left. For notably different opinions see "England: Dead End of Liberalism?" by Barbara Goodwin, Dissent, Winter 1981, and "The British Labour Party and the Social Democrats," by Michael Rustin, in our Summer 1981 issue. — EDS.

The Social Democratic party (SDP) was launched in March 1981. It appeared at once as the most serious challenge to the British party system since Labour began to contend for national office in the 1920s, and as the biggest split in a potential government party since 1886. But its stability remains precarious, for while strong at the top and bottom, it has not yet acquired a solid structure. At the top, the Labour party has lost 30 former ministers (half of them ex-cabinet) in recent years. Nearly all have joined the SDP—an unprecedented hemorrhage from a potential governing party in 20th-century Britain. Almost all opinion polls indicate that an SDP-Liberal alliance would beat both the other parties in a general election.¹ Since May its Gallup poll lead over Labour has averaged 7 percent, over the Conservatives 12.5 percent. Even if it fell back in the campaign, the SDP could probably shatter the two-party system and hold the balance of power in a hung parliament.

Why have the old certainties crumbled so suddenly? The two-party system has become increasingly unpopular. First-past-the-post elections in single-member seats have ensured to one party a virtual monopoly of power, to the other a monopoly of opposition. Fear of defeat at the next election was supposed to keep both parties moderate and responsive, so as to hold the decisive votes in the center; meanwhile the voting system magnified parliamentary majorities, electoral prudence kept

MPs loyal, and governments enjoyed stability for long enough to compile a record on which to be judged. These assumptions have gradually broken down, leaving us with the same structures, no safeguards, and less acceptable outcomes.

As Britain's economic decline accelerated, the old order was increasingly challenged from both wings. The extent of the consensus was exaggerated, and party leaders who respected it were condemned for economic failures—by successors under whom inflation is higher and unemployment has trebled. In both the big parties the polarizers gradually gained ascendancy, imposing in office measures the other party promptly undid. Governments remained stable, provided they kept their parliamentary majorities (not all did); but policies shifted so frequently that rational planning—in education or local government, private and public-sector industry—became a nightmare. Both governments and oppositions rested on a shrinking base of popular support. For the first time, instead of the out-party gaining popularity as the in-party lost it, both have declined—in general-election voting, in dwindling membership, and in respect for their national leaders.²

Within each party, agreement on principles and policies is disappearing. Always coalitions, they are both now fraudulent coalitions, composed of politicians who hate their "colleagues" more than their "opponents." They stay together out of fear of electoral

disaster if they split, and in the hope of gaining control over the party organization—assuming their voters will be kept loyal by fear of the other side. The electoral system, with its ruthless elimination of third parties (except nationalists), has now become a life-support mechanism for two increasingly unpopular and obsolescent political machines.

These developments have gone furthest on the left. Labour was always a “broad church” embracing disparate elements, but until the later 1960s the moderates were always ascendant though never unchallenged. The gradual leftward slide of the unions reflects, first, the growth of public-sector and white-collar unions, often run by left-wing activists effective industrially but quite unrepresentative politically and, second, the decline of many traditional manual occupations, where some unions have been radicalized by the struggle to preserve a threatened economic position. For most union leaders, political choices rank far behind industrial and organizational needs; but they see the Labour party as their political instrument, and they can decide, collectively, its main policy options. A generation ago, the biggest unions defended the parliamentary leaders against the left, but recently many of them have taken its side at conferences and have sent left-wingers to the National Executive Committee (NEC), which runs the organization. In the NEC the left has for 30 years been entrenched among the minority of constituency-party representatives. The “party outside Parliament,” which has been challenging the parliamentary leadership, thus represents not the Labour voters, whose broad preferences are usually for the moderates, but the unions (the most unpopular interest group in the country) and the local activists (who probably run them a close second).

In the last ten years this alliance has consolidated its hold and substantially changed the internal party balance of power. First, the left’s new majority on the NEC abandoned in 1973 the 50-year-old ban on “proscribed organizations,” which had kept out the offi-

cial Communist party and its many fronts. As challengers from the revolutionary left, the CP had by then largely been supplanted by various Trotskyist sects and “fellow-trotters,” who could now enter the Labour party and were even assisted to take over its youth organization. Dedicated, single-minded, and well-financed (with more paid organizers than the party itself), the hard left “Militants” attract much (critical) media attention, and control perhaps as many as 60 local parties (out of 600). They are not about to capture the entire Labour party, but for the first time they have found nonrevolutionary allies who will not break with them; they have altered the terms of internal party debate and given it a newly strident and venomous tone; and they have no concern for electoral consequences. By driving moderates out of the party, they hope to capture its machinery, assuming the unpopularity of the Conservatives will eventually bring them to power.

Meanwhile they and their allies campaign to undermine the power bases of their party opponents. All MPs must now face a selection conference in each Parliament, which enables local parties to get rid of unsatisfactory members; it also enables the left organizers to select key votes, draw up hit lists, and target opponents, like the American New Right—with the same objective to remove a few and intimidate the rest (though by a different method, manipulating caucuses rather than appealing to voters’ prejudices).³

Labour MPs have always been pledged to support party policy as laid down in its election manifestos—which were agreed upon, in the past, by the NEC representing the extra-parliamentary party and the parliamentary leaders who would have to carry out the policies. These documents have become increasingly detailed over the years, and decreasingly relevant to the party’s reputation. (Harold Wilson, whose government of 1964-70 made suspicion of the leadership endemic, used to point with justified pride to his exemplary record of carrying out manifesto commitments.) After another Labour government (with no parliamentary majority) that disappointed many activists, the left pressed

hard to vest final control of the manifesto in the NEC, leaving the parliamentarians with nothing but the responsibility for implementing it. That proposal was defeated at the 1980 conference, but the left has regarded conference decisions as binding only when favorable to it; the others can be challenged each year until the left wins, when they become sacred writ.

Another major change concerned the election of the party leader, who becomes prime minister when Labour wins an electoral majority. Until Michael Foot beat Denis Healey in November 1980, the choice was made by Labour MPs—whose votes sustain a Labour government, and who through daily association with the candidates can judge their characters as no outsider can. In choosing Foot by a majority of ten, the MPs hoped to contain the revolt on the left—for which Healey was a prime target—and to ensure for themselves a reasonably quiet life. Healey was unanimously chosen as Foot's deputy to console the right wing and maintain unity in the party. Both hopes were disappointed.

The left wanted the choice transferred to a new "electoral college," representing the trade unions and constituency parties (CLPs) as well as the MPs. The idea had been accepted in principle, first (rashly) by Callaghan and Foot, then deputy leader, and later (narrowly) by the 1980 party conference. Alternative plans were debated at a special conference at Wembley in January 1981, and through procedural muddle, tactical skill on the left, and simple accident, the formula favored by Callaghan and Foot was lost and the left's proposal carried: instead of each having 25 percent of the votes the unions were to have 40 and the CLPs 30, with the MPs' share cut from 50 to 30 percent. MPs must for the first time vote publicly—and at the party conference where, in recent years, they have been savagely pilloried by the militant left.

Ironically the unions, knowing their unpopularity, had no wish for so visible a role; but over the following months most of them, desperate to end the internecine warfare, accepted the new formula rather than con-

tinue the dispute. They too were soon disappointed, for Tony Benn challenged Healey for the deputy leadership in the new electoral college. The battle was waged in every union conference, dragging the unions even further into the political arena. Benn's appeal was based on distrust of the incumbents so openly that Foot challenged him (in vain) to stand for leader, not for deputy. This also divided the left seriously for the first time in recent years, with many of the *Tribune* group (the "old left" MPs) desperately seeking a rival left candidate to oppose Benn; they finally put up John Silkin.⁴

The campaign within the Labour party, though given its bitter tone by the hard left, attracted much wider support from constituency activists disillusioned by the inability of Labour governments to reverse Britain's economic decline, and recognizing no responsibility on the left for that outcome. Benn led it with a remarkable eye for such newly attractive issues as participation; with an innocent willingness to disavow responsibility for the policies of the cabinets from which he had tenaciously refused to resign—thereby earning the deep distrust of all his former colleagues; with Kerensky-like readiness to work with the enemies of democracy (each side of course hoping to use the other); and with apparent indifference to immediate electoral consequences, provided he can capture Labour's machine. Americans are familiar with politicians whose primary triumphs lead straight to disaster in the general election, and with sincere advocates of grass-roots democracy who install a new and even less representative elite.⁵

The Wembley conference was the immediate occasion for the SDP's break. But that outcome had grown steadily more likely as the left registered its organizational and constitutional gains and won repeated victories on policy: immediate departure from the EEC; unilateral nuclear disarmament—though other defense policies are inconsistent with that; some renationalization without compensation. For years the departing lead-

ers had tried in vain to mobilize resistance to those trends; other Labour right-wingers convinced themselves that the left could be accommodated and the old coalition kept together, while a few, cherishing hopes of the party leadership for themselves, feared to alienate centrist votes by vigorously attacking the left. Those party traditionalists, however, were sufficiently alarmed by the imminent split after Wembley to open a fight to reverse those decisions they had not worked to prevent. At the time the SDP leaders, as Shirley Williams wrote, thought that thanks to their gamble the battle within the Labour party they had been unable to win alone might at last be taken up.⁶ Having failed to save the party from within, they might stimulate others to do so—like kamikaze pilots, achieving their objective at the cost of their own careers.

Supported by a few left-wingers, many centrists, and the leadership, the “Solidarity” campaign was launched by 150 MPs, mostly from the Labour right—in an attempt to contain the split that could have been averted had the campaign begun a year or two earlier. Its original aims were: to change the Wembley formula by restoring half the votes in leadership elections to the MPs (“50-25-25” instead of “40-30-30”); to reconstitute the NEC to represent Labour MPs and local councillors; and to break the hard left’s control there. At the time, at least the first and third aims seemed winnable. But the internal Labour balance was far shakier, and the left bandwagon was rolling much faster than most people had expected. Holding the initiative, the left kept its opponents busy fighting to stop Benn’s steady advance and its own other moves to subordinate local councillors as well as MPs to the tight control of the party activists. These pressures helped the SDP to recruit precisely where it most needed to do so, among Labour councillors and trade unionists.

The party conference at Brighton in October 1981 seemed the last chance for Solidarity to reverse the trend and stop the hemorrhage. In traditional Labour fashion, it turned out a muddled draw. Healey won, by under 1 percent. On the decisive ballot Benn took four-

fifths of the CLPs (far fewer in Labour seats); an unexpected third of the MPs (mostly facing reselection), and nearly half the trade-union block votes. He lost because 40 MPs abstained, mostly “Tribunites” who incurred the customary vilification from his supporters. But trade union votes removed five Bennites from the NEC of 29, and though control of the manifesto was given to the NEC (against Foot’s advice) in one close vote, it was snatched back in the next when one union switched. Unilateral nuclear disarmament was approved (by just under the two-thirds majority needed to make it official policy), but withdrawal from NATO was rejected. The decision to leave the EEC was affirmed overwhelmingly. Had Benn won, some 20 MPs might have joined the SDP; instead only seven then did so.

The Labour party has won a breathing space but perhaps no more. The electoral-college procedure—which one day may be choosing a prime minister—looked as illegitimate as the Democratic convention of 1968; the largest union, the Transport Workers, mounted a crude effort to consult their members, found they were for Healey—and voted for Benn. There will doubtless be efforts to make the process look more reputable, which will in one way or another affect the factional struggle; but Solidarity’s aim of giving MPs a bigger share seems almost forgotten. The NEC majority has shifted from Benn to Foot and the Tribune left, and no one talks any more of changing the NEC’s component parts. Benn might lose ground if he stood again next year and so may seek and earn credit by withdrawing his candidacy; and in resentment of his constitutional campaign a large majority at Brighton revived Labour’s old rule against discussing such proposals more than once every three years. But Bennite pressure will continue, however different its form. Trade union procedures are utterly unsuited to political policy-making, and very vulnerable to skillful manipulation, so that Benn’s opponents are far from secure. They have won an opportunity to regain lost ground but will very likely throw it away, since their majority (in conference,

NEC, and electoral college) depends on people who will be reluctant to fight the hard left. In any case the split between CLPs and trade unions is far wider, more open and bitter than ever before, and Labour will remain a deeply divided party.⁷

At the electoral level, party identification in Britain has been quite as strong as it once was in the U.S. The Labour party retains immense reserves of hereditary loyalty, affection, and unquestioning allegiance among people who know little, and would think little, of its recent policies. The 23 Social Democratic MPs (all but one of whom were elected as Labour in 1979) have declined to resign and fight by-elections under their new colors. Some would have won; but the others would then have faced immense pressure to follow—risking both their own careers and also the new party's credibility while it was still unorganized. The old party leaders revealed their real fears in April when 15 new peers were created. Michael Foot could have nominated MPs from safe Labour seats, challenging the SDP to fight its first by-elections on bad ground or stand aside, but instead he was careful to propose no sitting MP. Mrs. Thatcher also chose all the Conservative nominees from outside the House of Commons.

After nearly two years without by-elections, however, one occurred in July at Warrington in the industrial northwest, a Labour stronghold ranking 551st out of 635 on the SDP's computer. The most experienced SDP leader, Roy Jenkins—who had apparently ruined his image during four years as president of the EEC commission in Brussels—fought, with Liberal support, an unexpectedly successful campaign. Optimists hoped he might poll 30 to 35 percent of the vote; his 42 percent amazed everyone. He gained from tactical voting by Conservatives (whose candidate had no chance and did disastrously) and attracted nearly 30 percent of the Labour vote just where it had been thought most impregnable.⁸ Labour had ensured the shortest possible campaign; a week more and Jenkins might have won. This first by-election test bore out the consistent message of the

opinion polls, that the new party—even though it would be weaker at a general election—is a major threat to both Labour and Conservatives.

Nor can it be written off, as critics suggest, as just a media creation. At the moment of launching, it did attract immense attention; but out of the news two months later, it was still polling competitively with the older parties, and an SDP-Liberal alliance was still well ahead of them. Soon after Warrington the SDP scored victories in several local council by-elections in safe Labour seats—many of them in the depressed north of England where it had been said to be weak.⁹ The media have been a handicap as well as a help to an operation that is almost unprecedented and highly delicate; for politicians under constant interrogation on television cannot plan in privacy, or freely choose their tactics and timing.

The SDP's appeal seems only marginally dependent on artificial publicity generated by the media. Its charms of novelty have not yet been tarnished by precise commitments that might cause offense.¹⁰ While the average voter attends far less to detailed policies than political enthusiasts suppose, the SDP will lose some support when it ceases to be all things to all men, and more at a general election if many voters revert to old allegiances. Then the extent of its decline would be critical. For a party with evenly spread support, like both the SDP and the Liberals, will suffer heavily from the present electoral system if it polls below 34 percent of the vote, and will benefit heavily if it exceeds 37-39 percent; in between, each extra percentage point brings a fat increment of seats. The BBC's computer, implausibly translating the Warrington result into national terms, gave an SDP-Liberal alliance 501 seats to Labour's 113, with one lone Conservative; all opinion polls gave it a clear majority in the House of Commons. Even if the new combination fell back (surprisingly) to 25-30 percent of the vote, it should win at least 20-50 MPs, which would probably mean a hung parliament and a good chance of extracting proportional representation.

All these possibilities depend on an effective SDP-Liberal alliance. If they fought separately, the two parties would compete for much the same constituency, and would incur the drawback of looking like a wasted vote instead of a potential government. The leaders of both have been well aware of the stakes. But there has been much resistance and jockeying for position. Some came from overconfidence in SDP quarters after the euphoria of the launch and the polls; and the Liberals, who have expressed for much longer many of the criticisms of British government now being articulated by the SDP, naturally resent newcomers claiming the main share of a harvest they see as rightfully theirs. Probably they could not reap it on their own, but some Liberals still suffer, as their leader David Steel put it, from "the smallmindedness of cosy minority party politics."¹¹ Many local parties sympathize with the Liberals of Croydon, south of London, where another pending by-election offered an excellent chance to the SDP, but the Liberal candidate, a three-time loser, refused to withdraw—even though Steel risked his own authority by his open sympathy with the SDP's claims there. His rivals tried to exploit that against him, but at the Liberal Assembly in September the alliance was approved far more overwhelmingly (16-1) than anyone expected.

Even so, Steel cannot impose his will on local Liberal parties, and the inevitable untidiness and local friction will do the alliance some harm. Welcoming any adherents to keep up momentum, the SDP recruited a Labour MP and 16 local councillors from a London party with a dubious reputation; the angry Liberal protests against supporting "machine politicians whose machines have broken down" will probably help to keep such undesirable refugees to a minimum.¹² But the two parties differ in their policy outlook, their traditions, their structures, and their members' temperaments; the SDP leaders are natural men and women of government, while—having known nothing but opposition—few Liberals think like Steel in terms of power.

Conservatives increasingly fear that Mrs. Thatcher is leading their party to electoral disaster. In the past they have rarely conducted their feuds in public (as Labour has always done). But changes in the party's social composition and the new ascendancy of the right wing have already made this the most openly quarrelsome Conservative government since the early years of the century. Mrs. Thatcher's long-standing critics were joined in 1981 by two senior and respected figures hitherto allied with her, Lord Thorneycroft, then party chairman, and Francis Pym, leader of the House of Commons. Her fall before the next election is most improbable, since most Conservatives think it already too late; but it is not quite unthinkable. She has so emphasized her determination that she cannot now change without destroying her credibility. Her cabinet reshuffle in the autumn committed her irrevocably to her course, tying her political survival to the party's electoral fortunes and so, probably, to the fate of her economic policy. If those electoral prospects do not improve, the Conservative defectors to the SDP (one MP early on, eight former student leaders in the summer) may well be joined by a few more politicians and droves of voters. Conversely, a further big Labour secession might transform the SDP's composition.

Early recruitment was rapid, the SDP soon reaching 60,000 adherents—probably a quarter or a third of Labour's true individual membership before the break. Many joined the SDP from other sources: they were stronger among the young than the middle-aged or elderly, in the middle class than in the working class, and twice as numerous in the south as in the north. (Commentators often forgot that Labour too has for years had more members in middle-class and southern seats: parties in safe working-class constituencies are often tiny.) The SDP's enthusiastic followers show a similar pattern. But its larger, broader, and softer following is more evenly spread, by age and class and region, than any other British party—a grave handicap under the present electoral system.

The party has been able to draw on plenty

of volunteers for its by-election forays; its staying power over time has still to be tested. A general election will also show whether the activists who give time and energy to party maintenance and electoral campaigning are really providing an indispensable service and so earning a major say in making party policy. The 1975 referendum on the EEC, which with little campaigning and no canvassing generated a 67 percent turnout, suggests they are less essential than they claim. But whether the new party can sustain a permanent organization to survive in local politics—still the foundation of party machines in Britain—is more doubtful. Money is also a problem, for the SDP cannot rely on the union contributions that keep the Labour party just clear of bankruptcy, or the business donations that the Conservatives attract; even public financing of parties (sought by Labour, fought by Tories) would not help the SDP until the next election. Its members are warned that they can only “build a party which is in no one’s pocket by digging into your own.”

Nor can access to the media in Britain be bought. At general elections parties that contest 50 seats are allowed one five-minute broadcast on television, while the established parties have agreed to a formula for allocating time between themselves according to their vote at the last election: in 1979 the Labour government and Conservative opposition had five short broadcasts each and the Liberals three, simultaneous on all channels. In the unprecedented new situation, Labour and the Conservatives will certainly resist any concession to the SDP, and probably will not recognize the danger of offending the voters if they overexploit their advantage (like many past French governments). More important during an election are the news items, when the broadcasters—at once judges of news values and guardians of a fuzzy “political balance”—will come under vigilant scrutiny from jealous politicians.

Much effort over the next couple of years will be devoted to detailed work on elaborating the new party’s policies. British politicians and journalists are so accustomed now to instant party pronouncements that the SDP

has faced much criticism for declining to set out detailed policies in its first few weeks. It refrained for two reasons.

First, the leaders who sponsored it had held office, had suffered from the manifesto worship that afflicts the Labour party, and had realized that in government it is the response to unexpected and unpredictable challenges that really determines success.

Second, the SDP’s appeal is to novelty, disillusionment with its rivals, and its members’ hope of having their say in a movement unencumbered by unions, political machines, or business pressures. The SDP leaders, while still in the Labour party, had tried to outflank the call for “more participation” by extending it to all party members—not simply the activists or the management committees. In suggesting an electoral role for the future membership, the SDP deferred an awkward leadership choice between Mrs. Shirley Williams, who was the most popular in the country, and Roy Jenkins, who might well be preferred by the SDP MPs. But the holding device of collective leadership cannot be kept permanently. In September the party steering committee proposed both a president elected by the membership, and a separate parliamentary leader. A majority (not including Mrs. Williams) wanted the latter picked by the MPs to avoid their having to follow a leader (or prime minister) whom they had not chosen. Dual leadership would cause obvious tensions if one tried to overshadow the other; while it is common on the European continent, governments there are not dependent every day on their parliamentary majorities. The September proposal requires endorsement of the MPs’ choice by a representative council of the membership. It will be put to a party conference in 1982.

Greater problems arise over policy, which the membership will also decide. The original four leaders (though not all their colleagues) have for 20 years been strong defenders of the EEC, which has sometimes seemed their main bond; yet opinion polls suggest that most SDP voters (not necessarily members) share the general British disillusionment with it. The SDP leaders all oppose unilateral dis-

armament, but its members need not adhere to their view on that or other matters: no one knows how strong the unilateralist feeling (rapidly growing in Britain) may be among them, but the Liberal Assembly in September passed comfortably a motion opposing the siting of cruise missiles in Britain—implying possible conflict, perhaps between the allied parties, perhaps between the leaders and the members of both. Decentralization is a professed SDP objective; how can it be reconciled with efforts toward social justice and economic equality? All parties have found that economic plans, which look attractive in advance, may not work in office. There will be plenty for the party's new policy committees to do.

It does not follow that no one knows what the new party stands for. Its leaders' general outlook and approach are familiar, and the contrary reproach is more damaging: that it merely proposes to restore policies that have failed in the past. Internal tensions naturally exist among the SDP leaders and between them and the Liberals; but these gaps are narrow, even trivial, compared to the wide abyss that yawns between the halves of the Conservative party or the boundless and stormy ocean that separates Labour's hostile wings. On the main domestic issue, unemployment, Roy Jenkins made proposals at Warrington that were far more serious and credible than anything on offer from Labour or Conservatives. No American would expect a party's viability to depend on the details of its platform; and though the terms of political discourse are very different in Britain, the reality is not so dissimilar.

The last major problem of the SDP, of which the others are largely a function, concerns its strategic aim in electoral or sociological terms. Should it go all out for a majority at the next election in alliance with the Liberals or concentrate its limited resources on the most likely seats, aiming openly for the balance of power in a hung parliament and the attainment of proportional representation (PR)? The prudent strategy would have made

a pact with the Liberals easier to arrange, since the SDP would compete with them in fewer seats, but would also make the Liberals the senior partner. It would also have been easier to cooperate after the election with the SDP's other natural allies on the Labour right—ex-colleagues separated only by different tactical assessments of Labour's future, whose cooperation would become essential under PR.

Instead the bolder course has been chosen, with its one overwhelming advantage: an SDP-Liberal alliance that looks like a potential government, not merely a repository for a wasted vote. With the opinion polls so favorable, no other outcome was conceivable. Yet doubts remain. While the Liberal alliance is essential, more widespread competition makes it likelier that some Liberals, detesting arguments about power, may sacrifice interests to emotions and upset the deal.

Beyond the electoral problem is the sociological: will the new party become a catchall of the center or develop as the true heir of the traditional Labour party? The first option would facilitate a deal with the Liberals but limit the SDP's advantages—for the Liberals have always found it easy to win votes (between general elections at least) from the Tories, but not from Labour. That option would also attract more new members—who might, however, prove inexperienced, heterogeneous, and unreliable. It would make it easier, too, to beat the Conservatives by taking their votes—which would then pull the SDP to the right, making it harder to win Labour voters. Its prospects depend mainly on how much support Prime Minister Thatcher loses among, first, established Conservative politicians worried for their seats; second, liberals (in the U.S. sense) among the younger-generation Conservative elite; and third, disillusioned voters who cast a Tory ballot in 1979—often their first—and have repented of it ever since.

The prospects for the second option depend, similarly, on developments in the Labour party. Three of the original four leaders would prefer it while the fourth (Roy Jenkins) and David Steel would both be con-

tent with it. But if the SDP won no substantial accretion of Labour and working-class strength, but did become a haven for unhappy Conservative moderates and Liberal realists, its policies might well prove unattractive to Labour voters, leading to its absorption by the right. That expectation might prove correct if the Solidarity campaign were to win a complete victory within the Labour party (including the expulsion of the revolutionaries). It is not likely. Unions and CLPs have (contrary to legend) rarely taken opposite sides in the past; now the differences look too deep to heal though they may temporarily be covered up. The internal struggle is almost sure to go on with unremitting bitterness on the national level, in union branches and conferences, and in constituency parties and council groups up and down the country. If the left continues gradually inching forward within the organization, others will be called on to make disagreeable concessions on policy and in behavior—such as showing party regularity by speaking for the left-wingers who threw out their own parliamentary friends.

So in time more defections to the SDP are likely, tilting the balance further left among those who remain; perhaps even one day turning the SDP in effect into the old Labour party renamed (with much union support but no formal affiliation), while the Labour rump and the machine survive, mislabeled, as a new

party recalling the tiny Independent Labour party of the 1930s—though bigger, more revolutionary, and much less anti-Communist. Brighton deferred that prospect for a time, but in the longer term it remains open.

Labour's internal developments will also largely decide the SDP's impact on the British political scene. We have seen that under the present electoral system, above the threshold of 33 percent, tiny increments of extra votes become critical. But a new party's share of seats would depend on the distribution of votes between its rivals as well as on its own performance—unless it ran so far ahead as to win an overall majority. In the past, had that looked likely, the other parties would have shifted rapidly to head off the danger. The few Labour optimists calculate that the Conservatives cannot now retrieve their popularity and that Labour's voters will not desert. If so the SDP might split only the Tory vote, paradoxically ensuring the very result it was founded to avert: a Labour government dominated by the left, based on the support of a still more shrunken minority of the electorate. But if the Conservatives follow tradition and adjust in time while Labour stubbornly refuses, the Tory defectors might once again return home at the general election; then, splitting only the Labour vote, the SDP might (as many Labour right-wingers feared) return the Conservatives to power despite their unpopularity. Dependent more on the electorate's distaste for the extremes than on positive enthusiasm, the alliance leaders may be unable to hold those voters whose former parties set out belatedly to woo them back.

Yet a clear majority for either Conservatives or Labour looks unlikely. The swing against the government may be heavier than usual. But since the older cities and industrial areas are losing population, redistribution of seats will at least partly offset the swing and so set Labour a huge task.¹³ Moreover, minor parties from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will win 20 or 25 seats; even 30-odd Liberals and SDP would thus make a hung Parliament extremely probable. That would give them a very strong position from which



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to bargain for PR. The current Conservative and Labour leaders are strongly opposed, but many Tories would welcome it to ensure against an unchecked Bennite government; and if left-wing pressures continue to grow, the (mainly covert) sympathizers of PR among Labour MPs should recruit many others protecting their own seats. Then, with the balance of power in Parliament, the moral authority of a huge underrepresented national vote, and the backing of many Conservative and Labour MPs, proportional representation supporters might well overcome die-hard resistance from an unholy (but unstable) Benn-Thatcher alliance. That would permanently change the rules of British politics.

Future elections would then be fought under quite different conditions, and future governments would have to be based on coalitions.

Since this new style of politics is the first SDP-Liberal priority, it is unfortunate (if understandable) that its implications have not been publicly discussed. In coalition politics, as West German politicians know, parties must first choose and then cherish their prospective partners. The SDP and the Labour right may then need each other; neither will be able to work easily tomorrow with those they seek to destroy today.

British political life has long been so solidly set that few really imagined it could change. Suddenly it has become as fluid as it was, briefly, 60-odd years ago. In August a respected columnist wrote, "Between now and Christmas almost anything could happen . . . if anyone tells you he knows what British politics will look like in four months' or four years' time, he's lying in his teeth."¹⁴

Notes

¹ Until September, this applied to 22 polls (conducted by several pollsters); two, which had asked a slightly different question and found the three parties close together, switched to the "alliance" question and found the same response as the others. (See Note 13 for this variable.) Two polls put Labour ahead in early October, just after its conference.

² Their combined share of the *electorate* was 80 percent in 1951, 61 percent in 1979 (only 55 percent in 1974). Their combined individual *membership* has fallen from perhaps 3 million to 1 million while the electorate has grown by 15 million. Pollsters have found fewer than 60 out of 200 approving *either* the prime minister or the leader of the opposition in six out of nine months this year; only once before, in 1968-69, have they ever fallen so low. They were over 75 until 1965, and for five-sixths of the time afterward.

³ So far about 130 members have been reselected and only 3 ousted. The sample is probably not random (MPs without local opposition would naturally come up early), and figures ignore the potential impact on MPs obliged to take decisions openly before reselection was assured. Profiles in courage are rarely displayed in today's parliamentary Labour party (PLP).

⁴ Benn announced his candidature at 3 A.M. because the *Tribune* group was about to urge him publicly not to stand.

⁵ Barbara Goodwin makes the same claim for the Bennites in *Dissent*, Winter 1981. (She also laments that British politics are insufficiently ideological because only private members, not governments, promote legislation on such matters as abortion or gay rights: which, apart from misunderstanding the British system, must

seem very odd to liberal Americans observing the consequences of bringing these issues into the electoral arena.)

⁶ *Washington Post* and *International Herald Tribune*, March 21 and 22, 1981.

⁷ At Brighton the delegates (mostly CLP) favored leaving NATO but the vote (reflecting trade union membership) was 3-1 against. The gap will widen further if, as some claim, CLPs are now recruiting new members from the far left.

⁸ A "MORI" poll (usually the least favorable to the SDP) found that he took 29 percent of the 1979 Labour voters and 59 percent of the 1979 nonvoters. *New Statesman*, September 11, 1981.

⁹ Seven ran, five won. *New Statesman*, September 18, 1981.

¹⁰ The MORI poll (Note 8) found 70 percent of SDP voters in Warrington giving negative reasons.

¹¹ In the *London Times*, September 9, 1981.

¹² "Machines": a quote from the Liberal chief whip at the Liberal Assembly.

¹³ Most polls ask three questions: how would you vote if (a) there were a general election tomorrow? (b) . . . between candidates (of four named parties)? (c) . . . contested by an SDP-Liberal alliance? The SDP does much better on (b) than (a) and the alliance does better on (c) than its components together do on (b). Different analyses of SDP support may be based on answers to any of the questions, or on the party's membership. The text figures show answers to (c) by the biggest sample yet—7,000 Gallup respondents in February.

¹⁴ Hugo Young, *London Sunday Times*, August 30, 1981. □

Luther Carpenter

Can Britain's Welfare State Be Saved?

Since 1945 the British welfare state has had special meaning for Americans. Liberals have praised its accomplishments as typical of welfare states; conservatives have used Britain's relatively slow growth and international decline as proof that welfare states cannot succeed. Both are mistaken. By almost any objective measure, such as the percentage of Gross National Product devoted to social services, Britain is the least developed welfare state in the European Economic Community (EEC)—with the exceptions of Italy and Ireland. It is Britain's very backwardness as a welfare state that makes it relevant to Americans. Britain is the social insurance state most like the United States, not only in the limited scope of benefits but also in regard to slow economic growth and a conservative government inspired by individualism and monetarism. Britain is an incomplete welfare state under attack—a paradigm of what happens when budget balancers and laissez-faire ideologues get their way. And Labour is now debating whether the welfare state can be saved.

In describing Britain as an incomplete welfare state, I am employing the approach Norman Furniss and Timothy Tilton used in their excellent book *The Case for the Welfare State*. Furniss and Tilton define the welfare state in terms not only of public services and social insurance but also of the ways these services integrate workers and nonworkers into the society. By contrast, a "positive" country such as the United States uses its services to stigmatize and divide. A true welfare state would also be characterized by full

employment and national planning to achieve it, and by business acceptance of these goals.

By this definition, Britain was not a welfare state even before the Thatcher government took over in May 1979. British social services, though extensive, did not provide all citizens with a basic minimum of civilized life. The gap between needs and benefits was more pronounced in pensions than in the National Health Service, which came closest to a welfare-state standard. The upper and middle classes, including many skilled workers, often resisted using public services to integrate the nation. Yet the Labour governments of Wilson and Callaghan did seek to bring workers into the decision-making process through a "social contract" with the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The social contract had some striking results, notably cash allowances for all children, and wage restraint accepted by the unions as a conscious sacrifice to fight inflation. By the winter of 1978-79 most unionists felt they were not being genuinely consulted on economic policy, and the social contract disintegrated.

The welfare state had grown stale. Planning for investment was inadequate; unemployment was allowed to rise to a level incompatible with the welfare state. Over its last three years, the Labour government had adopted monetarist policies and reduced public spending—partly because of pressure from the International Monetary Fund, partly because it didn't know what else to do. Every political party and interest group had begun to rethink its attitudes toward the institutions and policies that make up the welfare state.

Three Roads

THE BRITISH ELECTORATE is now being shown three roughly sketched maps of the future. Thatcherite Tories want a radical revision of Britain's economic and governmental structure. It is important to see that Thatcher's government is not just attacking the unions or the working class, the social services or the poor. It is attacking the welfare state in its broadest sense by trying to restore a competitive economy whose faults the social insurance state was designed to remedy. Anything that stands in the way of this ideological objective, such as consultation with trade unions *and* business, has been sharply attacked. The fact that business has benefited from the social insurance state makes no difference to Thatcher. The Tories want to slash the services of the welfare state, restore fiscal soundness, and leave room for economic individualism. I believe their attack is failing, because of the built-in resilience of the public sector and because the economy can no longer be run on classical lines. In the process, however, the social consensus upon which the welfare state rests is eroding.

Part of the Tory leadership and of the business community disagree with some of Thatcher's budget cuts and with her savage attacks on business. They fear the consequences of mass unemployment and public polarization. For two years journalists have expected that Peter Walker, minister of agriculture, or James Prior, until recently minister of employment, would lead a revolt within the cabinet. So far, Walker and Prior have restricted their criticism to gentlemanly winks that Thatcher simply ignores, but they may have to act soon to avoid political extinction.

Walker and Prior and their allies are the remnant of the Butler-Macmillan Tory democrats who broadly supported the welfare-state bargain. The new Social Democratic party and many on the right of the Labour party have the same overall position. They would carry on the existing bargain without enthusiasm, as a kind of lowest common denominator. Social Democratic leaders have

not promised to rescind budget cuts or expand services; instead, they talk vaguely about getting more out of existing expenditures. Most Social Democrats and dissident Tories appear to be Keynesians, for lack of a better alternative, but they have no appetite for an expansion of governmental powers over the economy. This pallid acceptance of the status quo now wins a plurality in public opinion polls, but I don't believe it can work.

The Labour party is sketching a more coherent road map. Its features add up to a reorganization of the welfare state. The main emphasis falls on developing a better economic structure to generate new investment and full employment. The alternative economic strategy of the Labour left resembles the "Keynes Plus" strategy of some TUC officials: a neo-Keynesian economic stimulus, which must be guided toward investment in industry by a stronger National Enterprise Board and protected against diversion into imports. These leaders also agree on the need to defend social security and public services.

Yet Labour does not present its "map" with much conviction. Many details remain unsettled. While all agree in theory on the need to consult the unions on planning and to generate more democratic participation in the society, in practice TUC officials want a kind of left corporatism, while many in Labour's left preach an uneasy juxtaposition of participatory democracy and further nationalization of industry. Beyond such disagreements, Labour's enthusiasm is sapped by the fact that many on the left would prefer to arrive at something other than a welfare state. The left, however, cannot conceivably desire an East European system, nor could it mobilize enough strength to replace the mixed economy. Admitting these facts would strengthen Labour's case.

For the purpose of analysis, I shall speak of three issues with which these road maps must deal: (1) the extent and nature of the services offered; (2) the kind of economic structure and policy proposed to generate jobs and resources that can be allocated to social needs; (3) the welfare state's crisis of legitimacy.

Prospects for Social Services

UNLIKE THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, Thatcher's government has not mounted a direct attack on transfer payments and health care. In the 1981-82 White Paper on Expenditures, total public expenditure on health (in constant 1980 pounds, ostensibly to eliminate inflation from yearly comparisons) is scheduled to increase by some 2 percent, while social security is budgeted for a 7 percent increase. These aspects of the welfare state have proved resilient. But both increases reflect a steady growth in the number of old people rather than an improvement in services. Another reason for the survival of these services is that they have cushioned the effects of Thatcher's overall economic policy. In particular, social security expenditures have risen to deal with unemployment. Britain's National Health Service and social security are in a stronger position than Medicare and Food Stamps in the U.S. because they are universal services. I talked with Tories who would love to cut them, but dared not. (Hence one message for American reformers is to concentrate on universal benefits as much as possible.)

If the Tories wanted to destroy these sectors, they would first have to remove them from enough people so that they were no longer universal, and then mop up the remnants. Are there any signs that this is happening? There is no effort to subject the health service, unemployment insurance, and basic pensions to means tests; but some cuts and manipulations of coverage show how gradual erosion could eventually destroy the social insurance state. In health care, the government is encouraging the use of private hospitals for some types of illness. Private health insurance is growing, because privately insured patients get surgery more rapidly at National Health Service hospitals. Some unions have even joined this alarming trend toward a two-class medical service.¹ This trend is bound to accelerate as long as the government refuses to finance capital-outlay projects and maintenance. For years both have been underfinanced. Before the Thatcher

government took over, the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO) wrote that only 25 percent of acute-care hospitals had been replaced since World War II, leaving some three-quarters technologically obsolete with over half the beds still accommodated in 19th-century buildings.² Current services have been maintained, at the cost of a deteriorating physical plant. The NHS sounds like New York City's subways. . . .

Thus even an apparently healthy limb of the welfare state can be cut off surreptitiously. A hostile government has dozens of weapons at its disposal. Inflation offers opportunities. Budgeting in constant pounds ostensibly meant that inflationary price increases would be covered, but the Thatcher government set cash limits on all social spending so that inflation above 14 percent in fiscal 1980-81 was not covered. The result has been an undeclared cut in the National Health Service as well as in less favored services. This technique was used to put pressure on public workers, making it appear that they must reduce wage claims or face additional firings. In the NHS, the doctors got an increase of well over 14 percent—and the nurses backed down.

The Thatcher government invented one trick the Reagan administration has embraced enthusiastically. It reduced funds for local governments and then left it up to them to make the actual cuts. Localizing the budget cuts can make it appear that the welfare state as a whole is not imperiled. Local governments and public employee unions have fought tenaciously, in many cases raising local property taxes sharply or overspending their budgets to force the government to come through with more money. However, when the cuts are added up, it is highly probable that they have widened class differentials and reduced the standard of living of many people. For example, housing built or assisted by local authorities has been sharply hit over the last few years. Provisional results for public-sector housing show only 44,300 units started in 1980, as compared with 148,800 units just four years earlier.³ In the fall of 1980, Michael Heseltine, the minister of the

environment, took the further step of freezing local government spending on both renovation and new public housing, thereby restricting further the housing opportunities for the poorer half of the population. The Tories have ignored construction companies' protests that these cuts are economically pointless.

Other sectors that have been hit hard are public transportation (many localities have had to restrict their bus services at the same time that the National Bus Company, British Rail, and London Transport are cutting back); education (budget cuts are clearly affecting quality, while the Tories are giving new subsidies to children going to private schools); and personal social services, such as community centers, residential homes for the aged and for disturbed teenagers, and household helpers. The results are widened differentials between car owners and users of public transportation; between children in private schools and those in state schools; between fully employed workers and marginal citizens. Many low-paid women workers in community centers, school meal programs, and other services have been fired, reducing their chances of achieving a full adult status in the community.⁴ All these cuts show the necessity of employing a broad definition of the welfare state rather than thinking only of health and transfer payments.

If public services are so important to the welfare state, can they be made the cutting edge of programs designed to stabilize the welfare state or go beyond it? The Social Democrats evidently do not think so. In the 12-point policy statement they issued in March 1981 they refrained from promising to spend more money on social services. Instead they emphasized the "quality" of health services, education, and housing, and gave a special priority to family support services and to eliminating racial and sexual discrimination (without spending more money on them). The Social Democrats tacitly accept the beliefs that Britain's social expenditures are too burdensome and that social progress will not come from expanding them.

The Labour party is at least one step closer to depending on social programs as a major

part of revitalizing the welfare state. It still sees social services as part of an expansionary economic policy. Influential groups close to the party, notably the Child Poverty Action Group, press for improved benefits. Yet, despite it, social benefits are not the leading edge of Labour thinking. The party has not launched a dramatic attack on poverty and inequality. Instead, many critics feel that the Labour party has to put more effort into defining its priorities *within* the social services. The advocates of social benefits admit that they are on the defensive: "... the obstacle to a positive programme of reform of the social security scheme is not just the cost, it is also the lack of political will which, in turn, reflects a widespread antipathy towards social security claimants."⁵

Given what appears to be a political limit on the size of social spending, British reformers often look for ways to reduce the net effect of a proposal. When the last Labour government created cash allowances for children, they also eliminated the income tax deduction for children. These simultaneous actions reduced the net cost and concentrated the benefits on working-class and poor families, whereas the previous tax deduction had given more money to well-to-do families. American reformers can learn from this example. Replacing tax exemptions with a cash grant for children could become a cornerstone of the positive family policy we so urgently need to rival the punitive policy of the Moral Majority. In addition, both American reformers and British socialists should consider taxing social security benefits. This would keep social security a universal benefit, yet reduce the net amounts paid to the wealthy and concentrate the benefit on those who pay little or no tax.

By themselves, social services do not make a welfare state. Full employment is at least as important. A full range of social services cannot be provided without full employment, and work is itself a basic right. Social services, of course, provide many new jobs, but they do not appear capable of generating enough jobs for full employment in Britain—or in the United States. Consequently, restoring full

employment has become the highest priority; this forces British socialists to emphasize economic policy over social services.

Tory Economics and the Welfare State

THE ECONOMIC POLICIES that provided the underpinnings of the welfare state are in disarray; for in this sector the Tories have made the most radical break with both the goals and the mechanisms of the welfare state. Like Reagan, Thatcher and her Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe want to return to a classical economy. They have virtually ended the government's responsibility for the economy. They are now trying to restrict the government's economic tasks to two—targeting the money supply and the volume of public borrowing.

The Conservatives' abdication is amazing. Even 19th-century governments intervened in foreign exchange markets to manipulate the value of the pound. But the Tories have let it float freely, from under \$2.00 to over \$2.45 and back below \$1.80. "Freeing the pound" included abolishing special controls over the export of capital, which had been maintained by previous Conservative governments.

In the two areas where Thatcher's government still admits a responsibility, it is trying to reduce the government's powers by making the policy instruments "automatic." It announced a fixed target for the growth of the money supply; and it reduced budgetary policy to a single number, the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR), rather than analyzing all the connections between the budget and the economy. The PSBR is the government's total requirement for borrowing for all purposes—deficit on current programs, capital for public industry, and investment in social capital.

Several points must be made about these fiscal and monetary policies, which the Reagan administration avidly copies.

- First, the exchange rate is not "neutral" and objective, as both governments pretend. In terms of comparative prices for goods, the pound was overvalued by at least 25 percent relative to the dollar for most of 1980. It was maintained at this

level partly by the effects of North Sea oil, but also by the government's use of high interest rates and the resulting inflow of "hot" money. Volcker's policies at the Federal Reserve are having the same effect in the U.S.

- Second, the government's monetarist policy is in a shambles. The government does not even have an accurate measure of money supply. The measures it does have suggest that the money supply has grown more rapidly than the official targets; that the money supply cannot be controlled by the limited powers the government has retained; and that to keep the money supply within its target would require a quixotically savage assault on the economy.

- Third, interest rates and budget cuts are used to create a recession as shock therapy for British business and unions.⁶ Throughout most of 1980 the prime rate was 17 percent; it was lowered to 14 percent in November. Yet the resulting shock has not had the effects that the Tories want, partly because of the built-in stabilizers of the welfare state. The government-created rise in unemployment has raised such public expenditures as unemployment benefit. Thus the British government is actually spending a larger share of Gross Domestic Product than its predecessor did in its last year in office. In turn, the growth of public expenditure raised the PSBR, the Tories' primary index of fiscal rectitude. The sequel shows how fetishistic the PSBR is. In order to bring it into line, the Tories decreed more spending cuts. For the purpose of these cuts, they made no distinction between transfer payments, social services, and public investment. As we have seen, transfer payments and public services were hard to cut, so the cuts fell on public investment—and that, ironically, threatens the whole infrastructure of the British economy: telecommunications, power, roads, railroads, gas pipelines, and aviation.

The Thatcher government also has tried to scrap all the mechanisms its predecessors devised to increase investment. The National Enterprise Board (NEB) was set up by the Labour government to provide capital for development in the national interest. In practice, most of its efforts went to rescue bankrupt companies, but some of these rescues did occur in new, high-technology industries.

Imperial Computers Ltd. and Ferranti (electronics) were both on the verge of closing before the NEB stepped in, because the private market astonishingly would not provide funds for them. If they had been allowed to close, Britain would have been totally dependent on the multinational giants and would have had no footholds in these technologies. Yet the Thatcher government forced the NEB to dispose of its profitable investments in both companies. Ferranti's management resisted the sale; they clearly felt that the NEB offered more support than the investment markets.

Even the man brought in by the Tories to whittle down the NEB, Arthur Knight, protested vigorously and ultimately resigned as the NEB was denied funds for further projects. His resistance signifies that the NEB was doing an essential job and that government intervention in investment had become a normal part of economic life.

This conclusion is confirmed by the parallel case of aid to the old industrial regions. Lancashire, South Wales, Tyneside, and most of the North of England, Northern Ireland, and much of Scotland have struggled economically for 60 years. They have received various forms of assistance since 1945. The last Labour government offered Special Incentives and a Regional Employment Premium to bring new industries to them and tried to modernize their old basic industries such as textiles and steel. The Tories eliminated most of this assistance. Then, in August 1980, they once again proposed designating a much smaller number of central urban districts for tax relief to encourage industrial development.

Thatcher's lack of an investment policy and her fiscal and monetary policies threaten the basic structure of the welfare state. Business is a major target of these attacks. The Tories are disrupting the ways in which businesses learned to use the welfare state to obtain stability and an assurance that investment would be profitable. Business grew accustomed to the high level of demand made possible by full employment and public expenditure. They liked subsidies for invest-

ments in development zones covering most of the country. In addition, many industries (such as construction) depended heavily on the government's consumption. Now Thatcher's government bends over backward to avoid using its powers to aid business, such as preference in assigning government contracts. Many companies complain that the government has made their fuel costs the highest in Europe while their European competitors have been assisted by their governments with lower energy costs.

Furthermore, the Thatcher government has disrupted the patterns of consultation with business that had developed over the last 35 years. Thatcher treats the Confederation of British Industries with great coolness, refusing to discuss broad economic policy with it. The Tories made a great show of their firmness in ignoring business demands for lower interest rates until November 1980, and in maintaining exchange rate policies that hurt business. The Tories' contempt for failing companies is yet another sign of the depth of their ideological crusade against the practices that developed within the welfare state.

The government's rationalization is that the strongest companies will survive and the rest will have to free labor and capital for use in new fields. This would make sense only if there were fields crying out for expansion that are being starved of resources; but in the current recession it makes no sense. Industries and companies suffering from the combined effects of domestic recession, a high pound, and high interest rates include strong companies with modern plants and industries important both for export and Britain's future. Even Imperial Chemical Industries, Britain's largest manufacturer and exporter, reported a sharp reduction in turnover and profits for the first half of 1980. The chemicals division of British Petroleum announced that they were utilizing only 55 percent of their capacity in September 1980. Publishing is one of the "knowledge industries" that should thrive in postindustrial societies, according to those economists who feel that countries should not protect their old industries, no matter how basic. However, British publishing has

been hit hard by the state of the pound and by cuts in local-authority spending on education. One of its basic suppliers, the paper industry, has virtually disappeared from Britain with the closing of Bowaters' newsprint plant at Ellesmere Port.

Machine tools and engineering components have traditionally been major British exports, but even those companies that managed to keep up the volume of exports have reported lower profits because of the strength of the pound and high interest rates. The behavior of one staunch Tory contributor, the Guest Keen Nettlefolds corporation, is especially revealing. On September 18, 1980, it laid off one-seventh of its total work force in the U.K.—10,000 jobs lost. A few days later, it announced the building of a new factory in France for automobile components, ostensibly to be near its market.⁷ New machinery bought with government grants is being auctioned off to foreign competitors as the textile industry shrinks. The consequence of this pattern of industrial closures, many observers feel, is that Britain will be left with an insufficient industrial base when the Thatcher government tries to reflate the economy to win the 1984 elections—or when Labour gets another chance to govern.

Labour's Alternatives

LABOUR'S TRADITIONAL RESPONSE to Thatcher's recession would be to increase public expenditure in a Keynesian manner, aiming at full employment. However, many in the Labour party no longer believe in this policy. The last Labour government in fact abandoned it for a "pink" version of monetarism. They applied deflationary policies and reduced total public expenditure from approximately 46 percent of Gross Domestic Product in 1974-75 to 42 percent in 1978-79, acting on the theory that the public sector was too large.⁸

Many on the left have portrayed this "pink monetarism" as a failure of nerve that a change of leaders would cure. This may have been a factor, but it is also true that Keynesianism has not been an unalloyed success;

since World War II efforts to raise the level of growth through Keynesian methods have quickly led to inflation and balance-of-payments problems, followed by a sharp squeeze. This is the famous "Stop-Go" cycle. There is no reason to expect that the structural weaknesses of the British economy, which have conditioned this cycle, will have disappeared when Labour gets to govern again. While there is now a lot of unused capacity in the British economy, much of the slack will be gone by 1984. Unused factories will be reopened in the Tories' preelection expansion—where they have not been permanently closed. Consequently, expansionary pressures will overflow, as usual, into imports and into inflation. In turn, rising imports will cause problems for the balance of payments. The value of the pound will also be affected by an outflow of speculative funds from British financial institutions. There is another basic problem in a Keynesian expansion: there is no guarantee that the expansionary stimulus will find its way into productive new investments.

Labour will therefore require interconnected policies for inflation, imports control, investment, and the value of the pound if it is to have any chance of implementing an expansionary economic policy. Many proposals to fill these gaps are swirling around within the Labour movement. Among the most impressive are the left's alternative economic strategy and the post-Keynesian thinking represented in several TUC and other trade union documents.

An alternative economic strategy has been the official position of the Labour party's National Executive since 1973; Wilson appeared to accept it as the basis of the social contract with the unions in the 1974 election. Stuart Holland's book *The Socialist Challenge* is still the fullest statement of many of the theories behind this strategy. It asserts that Britain is in a structural economic crisis requiring massive investment in industry, which in turn requires an expansion of public ownership and control. The alternative economic strategy thus tries to combine the unions' fear of unemployment and desire for

expansion with the left's desire for a further move toward socialism. It makes investment, rather than the social services, the focal point. The TUC's proposals agree with this emphasis. They are more precise than the alternative strategy on many details, and they make it clear that this investment policy is an addition to Keynesianism rather than a replacement for it. (The TUC's ideas appear in its annual *Economic Review*, while the ideas behind them are outlined in a European Trade Union Institute report, *Keynes Plus: A Participatory Economy*.)

Finally, a package of policies for public investment and expenditure that is in line with all these proposals was tested out econometrically on the Treasury model of the economy; the results are contained in *The Economics of Prosperity*, edited by David Blake and Paul Ormerod. As I describe these ideas, I will cite some of the major criticisms, to see whether the alternative strategy can become a coherent program to apply in office rather than something to discard (as was done in 1974).

Reindustrialization

FIRST, IS THE COLLAPSE of British industry really a crisis, or is it an evolutionary process that can be accepted? In his book *Britain: A Future that Works*, Bernard Nossiter argues that Britain may be evolving into the first post-industrial society, in which a majority of the population works in services, importing the bulk of the industrial goods it needs. Why should Britain struggle to keep a large part of its labor force in arduous, hazardous mines and factories? Most British socialists have not considered this argument, but the TUC rejects it. Its opposing slogan is a "balanced economy." This asserts that there are "core" industries producing such goods as steel, motor vehicles, and machine tools, which a modern economy must make for itself. The TUC's reasoning appears to be that a country cannot afford to depend completely on imports of these goods, and that they are necessary bases for other industries. Without pushing this idea to the extreme of autarchy, a

balanced economy is a reasonable image of what an economy should provide.

A second part of the notion is the refusal to choose between services and industry: "... industrial and service activities are complementary to each other rather than interchangeable. . . ." Services cannot simply substitute for industry. The TUC argues that private services, with the exception of tourism, create little employment; this is especially true of the financial services that dominate the private sector in Britain. In making this argument, the TUC only dealt with the effects of private services, but it implicitly accepts the assumption noted earlier that such job-creating public services as transport, health, and education cannot lead the economy to full employment. In other words, the TUC accepts a mixed economy. The final dimension of the TUC's notion of a balanced economy is regional balance; the TUC cannot conceive of simply abandoning the old industrial areas.

Is the notion of a balanced economy precise enough to indicate where the government should direct public investment and selective import restrictions? On a case-by-case basis, it is a reasonable translation of "national interest." It makes the national interest less narrow than most conservative versions as, for example, in the emphasis on regional development. With it the TUC shows signs of returning to and perhaps revitalizing the classical socialist slogans of production for use and the satisfaction of basic needs. This emphasis could avoid the poor results that came out of earlier Labour efforts to plunge into expensive, untried high-technology sectors such as the Concorde plane.

However, a case-by-case approach is neither aggressive nor comprehensive enough to get the economy moving. Most investments in the old core industries would be defensive. Modernization will keep them alive but will usually reduce the labor force they need. And companies also are not likely to generate so many new ideas that a Labour government could simply choose the best. In its testimony to the Wilson Commission on the financing of industry, the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) said that there was a short-

age of viable projects requiring investment. This testimony was obviously tainted by the CBI's desire to block Labour proposals for public financing of investment, but companies are certainly not coming up with enough new ideas. The National Enterprise Board had moderate successes in computers and microchips, but these industries threaten as many jobs as they create. The left does not accept the standard of profitability that has been applied to these investments, which in turn forces the NEB to "guess the winners." However, if Labour cannot come up with clearer criteria for investment, the NEB will once again be used to bail out "lame ducks," because only the lame ducks will ask for assistance. Replacing imports and meeting basic needs are two criteria that surely deserve further study.

The unions have made several useful suggestions. The National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO) argues for investment in the capital goods needed by the health service, the railways, and other services that have grown shabby. Such investments would create jobs in construction, form part of a Keynesian expansion, and in many cases make British industry more competitive. The TUC adds several cases where existing public industries can invest:

... the telecommunications network where a new generation of digital exchanges is about to be introduced and where, on the basis of a secure home market, System X could capture a large share of the massive world market; new rolling stock and a greatly developed electrified network for British Rail, together with a Channel Tunnel; replacement of Sealink's aging cross-Channel fleet; and investment in the energy sector to achieve a balanced energy policy.¹⁰

Labour's left tends to ignore these suggestions because of its populist hostility to the public corporations, but these proposals do make reindustrialization more precise and convincing.

The mechanisms the alternative strategy would use to spur on investment are the National Enterprise Board and planning agreements with major corporations. As we saw

earlier, the NEB proved too useful for the Tories to destroy in their first two years in power. The TUC strongly supports the NEB. It proposes an additional public lending authority that is to raise £1,000 million a year from pension funds and financial institutions. This proposal could help redress one of the worst structural imbalances of late-capitalist economies, the disproportionate size of a speculative paper economy relative to industry. People on Labour's left would give the NEB more capital to work with, and the power to take full or partial shares in profitable companies. They feel that selective public ownership could be used to check the outflow of capital from private companies by taking over some companies that have used Britain to generate profits that are then invested abroad. Taking over some offenders would intimidate others.

An enterprise board seems a natural part of the welfare state. The obvious question is, can it be used to make investments that capitalists won't make? I think it can—if it does not have the exaggerated expectations of profit that are responsible for shifting potential investment funds into nonproductive purchases of real estate, gold, and collectibles. Public investments can also be made less risky if they are assisted by selective import controls and by public purchase of their output, as many British socialists recommend.

Planning agreements are another level the Labour left intends to use to make private corporations respond to the need for economic expansion. The TUC does not endorse planning agreements as enthusiastically as it endorses the NEB, but it did say in its 1980 *Economic Review* that the idea was worth pursuing. Ideally, a planning agreement would involve both the unions and the government; it would cover five years with annual revisions; and it would deal with projected investments, location of facilities, employment, social costs, and imports and exports. The immediate problem with planning agreements is that they failed under the last Labour government. Only one was signed, with Chrysler, and it didn't meet the left's stand-

ards. This was not so much an economic as a political failure. It involves the third dimension of the crisis of the welfare state: the need to create a sense of cooperation.

Can the alternative economic strategy possibly reemploy the 3 million unemployed and find work for new school-leavers and discouraged workers? The authors of *The Economics of Prosperity* estimated that their package of current and capital expenditure by the government would reduce unemployment by a million over a four-year period.¹¹ Since this study was based on 1979 figures, there may be room for a larger stimulus. Some socialists would turn to non-Keynesian devices to get faster results. John Hughes, the principal of Ruskin College (the trade-union college at Oxford), recommends implementing the 35-hour week; providing selective grants to local governments for imaginative projects using structurally unemployed workers; providing more shift work in existing plants, part-time as well as full-time; and subsidizing a tapering-off from full- to part-time work for older people to free more jobs for the young.¹² Hughes's version of these ideas deserves careful study because he has calculated their costs and benefits. Although they are non-Keynesian ideas, they can be integrated into a Keynesian expansion.

Plugging the Holes

HISTORICALLY, much of a Keynesian economic stimulus has been dissipated into inflation and imports. Labour is reluctant to make inflation a distinct issue. Labour's interim policy statement "Peace, Jobs, Freedom" begins by saying "... we believe that Labour's strategy of expansion will help to curb inflation. Expansion will make it easier for industry to contain its costs. . . ."¹³ There is a lot of wishful thinking in these sentences. But part of the argument is supportable; for example, overhead costs per unit of output should go down as unused capacity is brought back into use. *The Economics of Prosperity* concluded that the inflationary effect of its expansionary package would be less than many economists would expect. However, the authors still calculated that their package would produce 3-4

percent additional inflation per year on top of the base rate for a nonexpansionary economy, and that inflationary pressures would get especially strong toward the end of the exercise.¹⁴

These projections placed the authors of *The Economics of Prosperity* in a real bind. They wanted to say that added inflation is a reasonable price to pay for more jobs but had to admit that inflation causes dangerous instability and social divisions. Consequently they were forced to consider an incomes policy. Many on the left and in the center of the Labour party share their reluctance on incomes policy. Under the last Labour government, successive incomes policies became essentially wage policies, holding wage increases below the inflation rate and thereby reducing many workers' real incomes. Resentment accumulated and unions eventually broke out of the government's guidelines. Nevertheless, an incomes policy is an essential part of any politically acceptable expansionary package. *Keynes Plus: A Participatory Economy* (a study drawn up for the European Trade Union Institute by a committee that included TUC representation) accepted this point, and Tony Benn has also conceded it when challenged. Now Labour has to accept the necessity more graciously and to integrate it into its proposals, in effect reconstructing the social contract that led to victory in 1974.

It is equally clear that an incomes policy cannot be the government's only weapon against inflation. Not to put forth other anti-inflationary policies makes the wage earners the only fighters against inflation, and thus implicitly accepts the view that wage increases cause inflation. Labour's right wing often seems to fall into this trap. But does the Labour movement have additional anti-inflationary policies? *Keynes Plus* recommends "a comprehensive policy for monitoring prices,"¹⁵ and special efforts to increase competition where appropriate. "Peace, Jobs, Freedom" also demands strong price controls.

Nonetheless, it is hard to be optimistic, given Britain's previous experiences with price commissions and the ETU's emphasis on the

difficulty of administering a price policy. Manipulating prices as part of comprehensive planning would theoretically give a price commission more leverage. The commission could recommend increasing imports, or restrict a company's credit while making it more available to potential rivals (including public industries). However, such measures could only be effective if a price commission were established permanently, which means that it would have to be accepted by business and the Tories. Here, as so often, reconstructing the economics of the welfare state becomes the problem of restoring the welfare state as a conscious social bargain.

Imports are the other hole through which a Keynesian expansionary stimulus has leaked in the past. At the end of the 1960s many Labour politicians felt that devaluation of the pound was not only the answer to imports but the key to sustained economic growth through exporting. Instead, exports only grew slowly, while imports did not decline despite their higher cost. In the recent past Labour speakers have not offered devaluation as a panacea, even when the pound was so overvalued in the summer of 1980.

As faith in devaluation declined, import controls became more popular within the Labour party. Import controls are part of the alternative economic strategy, and selective import controls were endorsed at Labour's 1980 Annual Conference. The TUC envisages reducing import penetration and saving jobs in such core industries as iron and steel, cars, and textiles. Specific mechanisms for some of these industries are now being established under the Thatcher government, notably an EEC cartel for steel and voluntary restrictions on Japanese cars. The TUC emphasizes nontariff controls: "... quotas, antidumping duties, licenses, certificates of origin or other administrative controls, price controls and restrictions on imports by the Government or industries in which it has an interest."¹⁶ The TUC has tried to get the Confederation of British Industries to join it in asking for import restrictions.

The wisdom of imposing import controls is hotly disputed by the leaders of the Social

Democratic breakaway. "The 'alternative strategy' of permanent general import controls cannot possibly be reconciled with our socialist commitment to the Third World and the abolition of poverty," they wrote in August 1980. The Third World dimension of this challenge is important, but secondary. It would be possible to negotiate opportunities for Third World trade within a program of selective import controls, as Stuart Holland stated in an interview before the Social Democrats left the party.¹⁷ Of the major declining industries that one would protect, only textiles face significant Third World competition, while most of Britain's imports come from the developed world.

The more important part of the Social Democrats' criticism is inherent in their fear of "permanent general import controls." They fear an isolationist Britain that turns in on itself and refuses to change economically. This charge has some validity. Labour politicians have often sounded jingoistic, especially on the related issue of withdrawing from the EEC. The EEC could conceivably be useful to an expansionary economic policy. Britain would find it easier to reflate as part of an EEC converted to reflation. However, the Social Democrats appear to defend membership in the EEC and oppose import controls in terms of a general belief in free trade, rather than out of a wish to plan for British expansion. As it stands, the EEC is costly to the British government, has not adopted expansionary policies, and does not provide an alternate way of protecting jobs. The Social Democrats' stand on the EEC is very revealing. They use it to attack Labour's alternative economic strategy, but they have not developed their own strategy and therefore have no alternative to "pink monetarism."

Between Anger and Social Peace

I DO NOT WANT TO OVERDRAMATIZE the growing crisis of legitimacy in Britain's welfare state. Much of Britain still seems comfortable and relatively calm; one can build on the strengths that remain. However, the riots that erupted in most major cities in the summer of 1981 signified that the disintegration of the

welfare state has reached a point where it cannot contain the anger of youths excluded from full membership in society by unemployment, lack of training, race, and class. These are the most explosive people; others are more subtly infected by bitterness and frustration. Many old people and many families headed by single parents live in despair. Slow growth and widening class differentials affect more people, as do inflation and the shabbiness of housing, mass transport, and health facilities. Individuals scramble to get special benefits for themselves and to deny them to others, breaking down the willingness to guarantee everyone a basic standard of living.

Thatcher's victories, first over the Tory democrats and then in the 1979 election, were in part an expression of the bitterness of some skilled workers and some members of the middle, entrepreneurial, and managerial classes. She appeals to those who want to punish "scroungers." Home Secretary William Whitelaw expressed the hard-line reflex when he opposed employment and social programs to heal the discontent shown in the riots. "... Worldwide experience has shown that it is quite impossible to buy oneself out of difficulties of this kind," he said.¹⁸ In general, the Thatcher government has prided itself on its toughness and its refusal to try to create a consensus, not only with marginal groups but among all the major interest groups that have obtained a voice in the welfare state. The Tories have ignored business leaders, and they have steadfastly refused to engage in the normal consultation with the TUC on economic and social policy.

Many people are tired of the atmosphere of discord and conflict. Sir Raymond Penrose of the Confederation of British Industries warned the government of the consequences of mass unemployment months before the riots, as did some Tory democrats. The Social Democrats have made national unity their central theme. "We want to get away from the politics of outdated dogmatism and class confrontation," Roy Jenkins said at the new party's first press conference. They attacked violent swings in economic policy, the way

each government undoes the work of its predecessors. They defended the mixed economy, which "must be supported without Conservative sniping at the public sector or Labour threats to private enterprise."¹⁹ In other words, the Social Democrats assume that the welfare state as it is provides the basis for social harmony and that the task is to manage it harmoniously.

The strongest part of the Social Democratic analysis is their awareness that Britain is a mixed economy and will remain so. More public investment, a stronger NEB, planning agreements, and selective nationalizations would still leave the economy mixed, but Labour's left is unwilling to admit this. Tony Benn expresses frustration at using "carrot and stick" methods to deal with multinational corporations.²⁰ But isn't this what selective nationalizations add up to? Nationalization becomes a threat to hold over a company's head. In fact, the left's insistence on more nationalizations fits awkwardly into their program of economic expansion. Benn and Holland do not state categorically that newly nationalized companies would invest more. Their desire for more nationalizations is unconvincing, for they are uncomfortably aware that public corporations have not furthered planning and democratic participation. To get around this problem, they recommend other forms of public ownership such as cooperatives. Cooperatives are worthwhile in themselves, but they do not make public ownership a necessary tool for economic expansion and full employment. For now, public ownership distracts both the left and the media from this fight.

Labour (and the American left) cannot avoid the "carrots and sticks" that annoy Benn. How does one overcome business resistance to Labour's plans? We have seen, for example, that only one company signed a planning agreement with the last Labour government. At the Eurosocialism conference in Washington in December 1980, Holland answered that it is Labour's job to mobilize pressure on companies to get planning agreements. This is true, but it is too confrontational to be the whole answer.

Planning agreements will remain an empty exercise unless Labour wins over managers to considering the national welfare as they plan. In other words, Labour has to turn the welfare state into a genuine bargain, in which it is openly admitted that Britain is a mixed economy.

Workers will have to take some responsibility for the health of companies, and management will have to agree to worker participation in decisions. TUC unions have tried to put this into practice for years in joint union-management Sector Working parties and Economic Development commissions in specific industries. The left, however, still recoils from these lessons as corporatist. This rhetorical anticorporate populism is now often counterproductive. How else can a mixed economy be made to work? As Colin Crouch shows in *The Politics of Industrial Relations*, a corporatism in which unions are strong and active can benefit socialist objectives.

A welfare state bargain cannot be created simply by Labour's ceasing to make demands, as the Social Democrats seem to believe. The

government cannot just declare its independence from the TUC and the CBI, as both the Tories and the Social Democrats want to do. The TUC and the unions are powerful allies for economic expansion. The next Labour government will have to create a consensus between itself, the TUC, and industry. That will be difficult, but the failure of Thatcher's economics may convey a lesson to some managers, and it may free some Tory democrats to support a revitalized welfare state.

Social peace cannot simply be made by agreement at the top. Corporatism can leave most people feeling that they aren't part of the bargain, even if they belong to interest groups that have a voice. This perception leads both socialist Labour people and the Social Democrats to discuss participation and decentralization. Of equal importance is a sense of public service and something to work for. The virtues of the welfare state are part of the answer—full employment and basic services for all. Another central purpose could come from reviving G. D. H. Cole's 1929 slogan: "Clean Up Britain."

Notes

¹ The wealthy and middle classes do enjoy substantially better health, but economic and social conditions explain most of the difference. Private patients get special treatment in NHS hospitals, but their numbers are still relatively small. I feel that these inequalities do not add up to two-tier medicine as practiced in the U.S. and in France.

² National and Local Government Officers Association, "Public Expenditure into the '80s" (1979), pp. 6-7.

³ *The Government's Expenditure Plans 1981-82 to 1983-84* (London: HMSO, March 1981), Cmnd. 8175, p. 79.

⁴ Anna Coote, "Fixing Up the Family," *New Statesman*, March 20, 1981, p. 6.

⁵ David Blake and Paul Ormerod, eds., *The Economics of Prosperity* (London: Grant McIntyre Ltd., 1980), p. 216. Blake is economics editor of the *Times* and Ormerod a research officer at the National Institute for Economic and Social Research; the project grew out of a Fabian Society committee.

⁶ Reagan has made the same moves as he tries to balance the U.S. budget.

⁷ *Guardian*, August 29, September 19, September 23, 1980.

⁸ *The Government's Expenditure Plans 1979-80 to 1982-83* (London: HMSO, January 1979), p. 6.

⁹ *Trades Union Congress Economic Review 1980* (London: February 1980), p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹¹ *The Economics of Prosperity*, p. 13.

¹² John Hughes, "The 35-Hour Week" and "Three Modest Proposals," in Barratt Brown, Coates, Fleet and Hughes, eds., *Full Employment: Priority* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978).

¹³ Labour Party, National Executive Committee, "Peace, Jobs, Freedom" (May 31, 1980), p. 6.

¹⁴ *The Economics of Prosperity*, p. 51.

¹⁵ European Trade Union Institute, *Keynes Plus: A Participatory Economy* (Brussels, May 1979), p. 39.

¹⁶ *Trades Union Congress Economic Review 1980*, p. 42.

¹⁷ *Guardian*, August 1, 1980, p. 7; December 3, 1980, p. 7.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, July 7, 1981, p. A-1.

¹⁹ *Guardian*, March 27, 1981, p. 3.

²⁰ Tony Benn, *Arguments for Socialism*, Chris Mullin, ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 52. □

Richard Lowenthal

The Future of “Social Democratic Consensus”

In recent years, it has become commonplace in the Western democracies to speak of a crisis of the “social democratic consensus.” What is meant is not merely a crisis in terms of the influence and self-confidence of the social democratic parties, their loss of government power in a number of countries, and the decline of their internal cohesion almost everywhere—but a crisis of the general belief in the welfare state. This belief had been founded in part on the Keynesian concepts and techniques of ensuring high employment and steady growth in a market economy by a public policy regulating the level of total demand, and in part on a high level of social security, achieved by combining insurance contribution with redistributive taxation.

This belief in the welfare state was not held by social democrats alone. Its fundamentals had come to be accepted by most of the “bourgeois” parties in a number of European countries, and had even come to be taken for granted by majority public opinion in the United States where no major social democratic party existed. Only when these fundamentals of the welfare state were aggressively, and for the time being successfully, challenged—first by the new anti-Keynesian militancy of the British Conservatives, and then by America’s Republicans led by Reagan—did the general public become aware of how broad the “social democratic consensus” had previously been. This label indeed is justified, for the social democrats not only had been the pioneers of the new economic and social policy—the Swedish election of 1932, which had brought the social democrats to power with the first program of this type, had indeed

preceded the New Deal—but in many countries they had been its most consistent and solid supporters.

So the crisis of the welfare state and the belief in Keynesian economics, under the simultaneous impact of steady inflation and recurrent recession, has hit the social democratic parties particularly hard. For them the welfare state, with its basic concepts of “full employment” and social security, had not only been a decisive practical achievement. It had become the principal highway to their goal of ever-increasing social justice—the tangible justification of their nonrevolutionary road to socialism. In the course of the past decade, however, the threat to those economic and social achievements, combined with changes in the social composition of many of these parties, has undermined both their social and their ideological cohesion. For the last decade witnessed both a “postindustrial” decline in the proportion of the industrial working class and a massive influx of intellectuals and would-be intellectuals, propelled to the left by the student revolts of the late 1960s and by the cultural crisis of Western values.

Earlier Achievements and Setbacks

IT IS NOT the first time in the long history of the social democratic movement that a period of great achievements has been followed by a crisis. The first such period of great advances lasted from the formation of the first mass parties in the latter part of the 19th century to the First World War, the split in the international socialist organizations, and the Rus-

sian Revolution. This period brought all over Western, Northern, and Central Europe the victory of democratic political institutions, founded on government responsibility to parliaments freely elected by equal suffrage; the achievement of full trade-union rights, and, in varying degrees, the beginnings of social insurance. Nowhere did this period bring about social democratic participation in these democratic governments, nor did any of the social democrats gain influence on the governments' economic or international policy.

This steady but limited advance came to an end with the war and the collapse of the Second International and the split in the socialist movement. The interwar period that followed was, on the whole, inglorious. Social democrats who came to power or participated in government coalitions made no lasting impact on either economic development or international affairs. Their achievements in those interwar years—from the eight-hour day and labor legislation in Germany after 1918 to the social legislation of Léon Blum's first Popular Front government in France—were essentially the completion of tasks the movement had already set for itself in the preceding period. In particular, no concept of how to use government power for steering a market economy had yet been evolved when the British Labour government collapsed in 1931, and the German Social Democrats proved unable to put forward an effective work-creation program to meet the world economic crisis that brought Hitler to power.

Rise of the "Social Democratic Consensus"

THE SECOND PERIOD of great social democratic achievements began, as mentioned earlier, with the Swedish party's election victory in 1932. This was no accident, for the Swedish school of economists, drawing on the work of Knut Wicksell, had independently developed some of the seminal ideas generally associated with the writings of John Maynard Keynes. The American New Deal, more consciously based on an (imperfect) use of Keynesian techniques, followed almost immediately, and also brought great advances

in trade union organization and labor legislation. Social democrats in several European countries then undertook to learn from the catastrophe of the German and the success of the Swedish—and the American—democracies by developing an economic "plan" for overcoming the Depression, but at first only the Norwegians succeeded in winning power on this basis. Only the restoration of full employment in Britain and in the United States during the Second World War led to the general conviction that what had been possible as part of the war effort must also be possible for peaceful purposes. Thus the provision of full employment and steady economic growth after the war came to be accepted as the responsibility of democratic governments.

This generalization could be converted into practice because the adoption of "Keynesian" policies in most Western countries was combined with the creation of a favorable international framework by the introduction of a flexible but reasonably stable world currency system in the shape of the "gold exchange standard" adopted at Bretton Woods, supported by the American Marshall Plan for the postwar reconstruction of Europe, and by the gradual creation of a European Economic Community. Its potential social democratic character was signaled by the dramatic electoral victory of the British Labour party in 1945, and confirmed by the constructive role of the social democrats in many European postwar governments, down to the belated introduction of a Keynesian "stabilization law" in the German Federal Republic in 1967—the year after the German Social Democratic party had at last joined the government in the Grand Coalition.

Thus the "social democratic consensus" gradually developed in the quarter-century that followed World War II. It brought the advanced Western democracies a period of unexampled growth in production and improvements in the standard of living, stable but for some comparatively minor recessions; an extension of social security, varying in degree from nation to nation but generally considerable, and advances in redistributive

taxation. This (while modest in most cases) together with the general improvement of living standards and social security contributed to the virtual disappearance of the “proletarian” status of the industrial working class, leaving only minor—and all the more offensive—pockets of real poverty. All this was achieved, in the first 20 years following World War II, at the price of a modest inflation inseparable from full or near-full employment in market economies with a free—or monopolistic—price policy and free trade unions. But that inflation was generally viewed as tolerable as long as it did not exceed annual average rates of 3 percent in Europe and 5 percent in the United States.

New Economic Problems

THE END OF this “golden age” was signaled in the mid-’60s by an acceleration first of the American and then gradually of the international inflation. At the time this was not produced by any inherent economic necessity, but by mismanagement of the American currency in the context of a balance-of-payments deficit that stemmed partly from the Vietnam War and partly from the seductions of the Eurodollar market. Since, under the Bretton Woods system, the dollar had gradually become the universal reserve currency accepted in the place of gold, its accelerating inflation was bound to undermine the operation of the system, until it finally broke down when the U.S. administration felt compelled in 1971 to suspend the convertibility of the dollar into gold at fixed prices.

Far more fundamental for the survival of the social democratic consensus was the recognition that steady, more or less “exponential” economic growth was bound eventually to undermine its own foundations. For, along with the generally admired unshackled development of the productive forces, it unleashed increasingly destructive forces as well. Awareness of this danger arose in two different contexts: one, the outcry of the environmentalists against increasing pollution of air and water by poisonous emissions of industry and by-products of chemical

agriculture; the other, the threatening exhaustion of naturally limited raw materials and sources of energy.

The discussion of the “limits of growth” at first centered around the abstruse problem of whether an *absolute* limit of economic growth was mathematically predictable or whether human ingenuity was capable of pushing the limit farther by developing new technologies and resources. Reality soon demonstrated the problem: each specific source of raw materials or energy had its natural limits—a fact with which a policy of steady economic growth was bound to clash repeatedly unless it took them into account in advance. The oil crisis caused by the Arab boycott at the turn of 1973-74 marks the point at which this real problem entered the general consciousness of the Western world.

Since then the speed with which OPEC has consolidated and exploited its monopoly, and the comparatively slow development of either energy-saving measures or alternative resources by the industrial countries have resulted in continuing increases in energy costs. These operate both as a spur to inflation in a world deprived of the built-in brake of a stable international currency system, and as a tangible barrier to economic growth. The measures taken by Western governments to protect the environment have further contributed to slowing growth in some directions. The net result is a recurrent tendency to economic stagnation in the industrial countries—not from cyclical lack of demand, as in pre-Keynesian times, but because of obstacles to growth on the “supply side” in the midst of inflation.

I am not suggesting that the oil crisis and related problems of raw material shortage or environmental damage are the only causes of the current tendency to “stagflation.” Another cause is the structural decline in a number of Western industries owing to large-scale changes in the international division of labor. Both the striking advances of Japanese exports on the world markets and the successful appearance of the cheap products of such “new industrial countries” as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and also

Brazil and Mexico are causing difficult problems of adjustment for the “old” industrial countries of the West. Like the consequences of resource shortage or environmental damage, these are *structural* problems that cannot be solved by “Keynesian” injections of *global* demand.

(Keynes, of course, would never have suggested that they could; he was not a mountebank offering a panacea but a serious economist dealing with the urgent problem of his time. The fact that, 25-30 years after World War II, new problems have arisen is no justification for treating this pathbreaking thinker as a dead dog. Keynes and the “social democratic consensus” that arose out of the application of his thoughts have given us a quarter-century of unexampled prosperity and security. So far the fashionable “anti-Keynesians,” who prefer to belittle his work rather than investigate the new problems, have given us nothing but the misery of Margaret Thatcher’s Britain.)

The Impact on Social Conflict

THE END OF steady growth and stable employment and the repeated onslaughts of inflation and recession have, of course, also had an impact on the machinery for social security and on the scope of redistributive taxation. Any increase in unemployment will diminish the yield of both income taxes and social security contributions at given rates, while increasing expenditure for unemployment benefits; this gap is widened by inflation, which also tends to raise the cost of health services disproportionately. Moreover, inflation tends to increase the income tax burden as a rise in nominal incomes moves the taxpayer into higher tax brackets even though he may have received no increase in real purchasing power. The net result is that the welfare state, in order to maintain a stable level of effective benefits, has to impose a growing burden on both insurance contributors and taxable citizens. Thus the part of the active population that loses more than it gains from redistributive taxation tends to grow. At the end of the process, a growing

part of the electorate may come to oppose the “excesses of the welfare state”—as has been particularly noticeable in the Scandinavian countries in recent years.

Inflation, of course, also sharpens social conflict more directly by producing the wage-price spiral. This keeps the employed population constantly fighting to maintain their real incomes, while the receivers of fixed incomes, particularly holders of small savings, are at a growing disadvantage. In their attempts to turn back inflation or at least slow it down, governments have tried a variety of devices to stop the spiral. Among these, imposed price and wage stops have proved utterly futile, at least in democracies in time of peace. Attempts at “concerted action” by voluntary consultation between government, employers, and unions have had limited success as long as the pace of inflation was slow enough to make moderation appear worthwhile for both sides. A more original device, the “social contract,” offering tax reductions to the workers in return for wage restraint, was successful in Britain for two years. It ended when the unions’ middle ranks and shop stewards rejected the “contract” in defiance of the moderate leadership, as the cumulative decline in real wages came to be felt as intolerable. In the event it was the British working class that first broke away from the “social democratic consensus,” thus helping a new Conservative leadership, totally opposed to that consensus, to win a sweeping electoral victory and, with that victory, to depress the workers’ condition to a lower level than they had known for decades by a policy of massive unemployment.

At present, such a drastic repeal of the achievements of the “social democratic consensus” is still exceptional in Europe. In Sweden, since 1976, the “bourgeois” governments that have followed after 44 years of social democratic rule have still broadly kept within the consensual framework, though with rather unsatisfactory results. Social democrats still rule Austria and govern West Germany in coalition with the liberals, maintaining most of their earlier achievements under increasingly precarious conditions. But

there as elsewhere the survival or restoration of the consensus is bound to depend on a solution of the new economic problems described above.

Roads to a Solution

WHERE THEN are we to look for the solution? I can see two principal directions for improving the mechanism of steering a market economy in the public interest. One is the increasingly conscious use of structural policies for influencing the *direction* of investments as distinct from their *global level*. The other is the creation of mechanisms for the *international, if not supranational, coordination* of such structural policies.

The basic condition for dealing successfully with the causes of stagnation, unemployment, and inflation is a sufficiently rapid structural adjustment of the advanced industrial economies. Shortages of specific sources of energy—at present oil—and of specific raw materials require measures that will serve both to economize their use and to speed the production of effective substitutes. While the mechanism of the market may eventually achieve both results, it does so only by ever more painful price increases that will fuel both inflation and unemployment. What is needed in order to prevent future shocks is more foresight than the unaided market has shown so far—foresight that must be deliberately practiced by public institutions and should inspire timely measures of public structural policy. Of course, public research institutions, and the politicians and bureaucrats relying on them, are no more infallible than the market. Their errors may at times be very costly. Their power over the economy should therefore remain limited; it should not be a power to impose administrative planning decisions of the type familiar in the Soviet bloc. But by consciously specializing on a broader range of foresight than normally inspires the market, they should be able to stimulate or slow down specific directions of investment by indirect means—for example, making them more or less profitable by temporary subsidies or tax policies, so as to

achieve the essential structural adjustments in good time. The same applies in principle to the adjustments needed to protect the environment against pollution.

A parallel problem is posed by the increasing competition of “younger” industrial countries in domestic and foreign markets. There are cases where the older industries have simply fallen behind by lack of initiative and technological progress and only are in need of a more dynamic leadership. But in quite a number of cases conditions favoring the “newcomers” are such that a shift in the international division of labor has become inevitable. It is indeed rational to allow certain old industries to shrink, and to concentrate on other fields in which the Western industries still can lead. Such problems, in the long run, will not be solved by protectionism, which will merely postpone the inevitable at the expense of world trade and the general standard of living, nor by a passive *laissez-faire* policy. Instead, we need a deliberate easing of the transition to new structures—by promoting new industries in areas hit by the decline of the old, by retraining labor and, in many countries, by a housing policy that deliberately increases labor mobility.

All the policies discussed in this section mark a new stage in the development of a public steering of the market economy. Over and above “Keynesian” global steering by way of influencing the *level* of investment, they aim at influencing its *direction* in order to achieve *selective growth* in adjusting to new conditions. For this new stage in the democratic control of economic development, a new stage of the “social democratic consensus” is clearly needed.

The International Aspect

THERE IS still one serious obstacle to making such structural policies effective: not all of them can be successfully carried out within the framework of the traditional national state, at least not in Europe. A particular state that moves ahead of its neighbors and competitors in structural adjustments to the changing international division of labor may

well benefit from its initiative. But the same is not necessarily true for the state that moves ahead in saving energy while its neighbors continue wasting it, or turns to initially expensive substitutes, or (least of all) protects the environment by methods that inevitably raise production costs. In the first two cases, an initial competitive disadvantage may later turn into an advantage, if the less farsighted neighbors eventually follow suit; in the last case, the disadvantage may become permanent if they refuse to do so.

Avoiding the twin dangers of inflation and recession in the "Keynesian" global scheme required some harmonizing of various national monetary policies, and this was achieved, at least to a limited extent, while the Bretton Woods international currency system was in effect. Even more, the new effort to bring about selective economic growth by the increasing use of structural policies will require the greatest possible harmonization in this field. Ideally, national decisions regarding the stimulation or discouragement of specific industries and processes in the interest of adjustments to resource scarcities or in order to protect the environment should be subject to some form of international, if not supranational, coordination. The experience of the European Economic Community offers little hope that such coordination will be easy: in the absence of a common European public opinion, competing interests have recently gained the upper hand precisely as the economic problems were becoming more difficult. Yet it is not only a new consensus *within* each country but an increasingly *international* consensus that is needed to ensure the effectiveness of the policies outlined here.

Such a new international consensus could not be created by the governments and bureaucracies alone. It would require the readiness of national electorates to accept, in certain fields, the subordination of national sovereignty to supranational majority decisions, with the understanding that the supranational decision-makers would be responsible to a supranational—for the foreseeable future, European—parliament. We are very far indeed from such a state of mind. Not only

do the present rules of the European Economic Community make majority decisions all but impossible—on the whole, they also have the backing of the sovereign national electorates. Growing economic difficulties have resulted everywhere in growing economic nationalism. We are lucky that this has not yet taken the form of rampant protectionism and competitive currency devaluations as it did in the world crisis of 1929-32, though the tendencies are certainly there for all to see. It was a missed historic opportunity that the first direct elections to a European parliament were not used (so far as I am aware, in any country or by any major party) to educate the electorate to the need for common European policies on common urgent problems—for instance, regarding energy savings and the development of new energy resources.

The North-South Aspect

ONE MAJOR PROBLEM has played, in most Western countries, an unduly small part in the considerations of the old "social democratic consensus": relations between the advanced industrial countries of the West and the poor majority of mankind in the "Third World." (The Netherlands and Sweden are notable exceptions in this general pattern of public neglect.) Here we can only touch upon Third World problems in passing, in connection with their actual or potential impact on the West. That impact, apart from OPEC's oil monopoly, is made by two major kinds of demands: demands for a direct transfer of Western resources (even with the prospect that eventually the West will also benefit from the consequences of such transfers), and demands for a share of power in matters of worldwide currency and credit policy.

In the last decade, the demands of the first kind have been concentrated less on the problem of public loans (except on their terms and the need for cancellation of debts) and more on the terms of trade—notably the stabilization of world market prices for Third World commodity exports, and the opening of Western markets for semi-industrial and industrial exports. On the last issue, the Euro-

pean Community has made a useful beginning in the two preference agreements of Lome, and it is to be hoped that this example will be followed. On commodity prices, the demand for "indexing" them, which would create a North-South inflationary spiral analogous to the familiar wage-price spiral, has been generally resisted by the industrial countries. But a beginning has been made with the creation of stocks and funds that contribute to price stabilization. Suffice it here to say that a return of the Western industrial economies to steady progress is unlikely unless the above demands are increasingly met. What also needs to be met is the demand for a "code" that would regulate the relations between Western multinational companies and the Third World countries in which they invest, a code that could clearly be in the interest of both sides.

More fundamental, and more difficult to settle, are the demands for a greater share of power for the "underdeveloped" majority of mankind in such international institutions as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This touches upon one of the essential conditions for the recovery of the Western world from the economic shocks of the last decade—the restoration of a functioning international currency system. The experts have long agreed on the principle that such a system should not again be based on one or two privileged reserve currencies, but on "special drawing rights" on a mixed basket of national currencies managed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The problem is to reach agreement on the quotas each country should contribute of their own currency, should receive in special drawing rights, and, above all, on each country's voting power in the IMF. The restoration of a functioning world currency system thus has come to depend on the settlement of a power issue.

In settling this issue, it is clearly necessary to take account of the new financial strength of the oil countries. Those who dispose of financial surpluses vital for the functioning of the world economy must have an important say in the management of international currency and credit problems. But it is as clearly

not possible to base voting in the IMF, or in the World Bank, on an approach to the principle of equality between states that obtains in the United Nations Assembly. The Assembly passes resolutions intended to reflect world opinion, but it has no executive power and makes no practical decisions. The IMF and the World Bank, however, have to make such decisions all the time; they cannot run the world's currency and credit system if they are to be governed by a majority of states that are heavily in debt. Thus, if the new order is to work, the recognition of the need for making substantial *material* concessions to the suffering majority of mankind in a "New International Economic Order" must not lead to recognizing the claim of that majority for *power* over the levers of international currency and finance. The advanced industrial world must, and will, renounce dysfunctional privileges. But it cannot, and must not, abdicate the functions that flow from its advanced state while the difference lasts.

A First Summing-Up

THE "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS," to sum up our argument so far, has not been hit by a crisis because it was based on false premises; decades of striking success prove the contrary. It has proved insufficient for coping with the new problems of the present age because it did not go far enough—not in the direction of a Soviet-type *replacement* of the market economy, which has not proved superior by any means, but in its own direction of democratically *steering* the market economy. It is failing because, first, it did not go far enough in developing structural policies for selective growth; second, because it did not go far enough in developing steering institutions above the level of the national state; and third, because, being a purely Western consensus, it did not go far enough in conceiving and negotiating policies for the improvement and stabilization of North-South economic relations.

Of those three groups of problems, the successful development of an *internal* consensus on structural policies for selective

growth inside particular advanced countries may be less far off than it sometimes appears to be under the acute pressure of inflation and recession. The conditions for an *international* consensus among the advanced democracies on those matters are much more difficult to fulfill; and those for a consensus that would include the Third World are clouded by grave uncertainties. It follows that a new "social democratic consensus" within our Western world is a realistic goal worth striving for—but only if three limitations are kept in mind. First, it is likely to be achieved only gradually as it wins the support of public opinion in one country after another, and as international cooperation based on it develops. Second, it cannot, and should not, bring another round of apparently limitless growth of mass consumption in the rich countries, but will have to aim at stability and security on a moderate level. Third, as long as it remains a purely Western achievement, which the "social democratic consensus" has been so far, it will remain precarious because of the uncertainty of relations with the non-Western world, not only to the East but also to the South.

The Role of the Social Democratic Parties

AT THE START of this essay, we saw that the postwar "social democratic consensus," while by no means confined to supporters of social democratic parties, bears its name with good reason. The social democratic parties, after all, have had a major share in bringing it about and defending it. We then observed that the decline of that consensus under the impact of new economic problems has inevitably weakened the attraction and reduced the cohesion of a number of those parties. But there have been other factors—above all, social composition and organizational structure—that have been influencing the role of the social democratic parties as well and may affect their ability to contribute to a new consensus that must deal with the present problems. To these other factors we must now turn.

The first is the "postindustrial" decline in the share of the industrial working class in the

population of the advanced countries. As industrial workers traditionally constituted the major force in most social democratic parties (except in France and Italy where the Communists controlled the majority of the industrial working class), this population shift was bound sooner or later to increase the role of white-collar elements in these parties. In earlier periods, any such increase was viewed as a factor contributing to the progressive *embourgeoisement* of the "working-class parties." Now, however, the crucial shift in composition of these parties has been brought about by the mass entry of left-wing intellectuals in the aftermath of the (West-wide) student revolts of the late '60s. The result is a paradoxical situation. The traditional working-class core of these parties for the most part defended the pragmatic reformism of the "social democratic consensus," whereas the intellectual newcomers spoke out for a neo-Marxist revivalism totally unrepresentative of the middle-class strata from which they had sprung. Social *embourgeoisement* tended to lead to a political radicalization that threatened to alienate some of these parties from the middle-of-the-road voters needed for an electoral majority.

The effect of this process was unevenly felt in different national parties in accordance with their political and organizational history. The French Socialist party as refounded by Mitterrand now probably has a stronger working-class element than in earlier times, owing to its rapprochement with the trade unions of the CFDT. The German and Scandinavian Social Democrats have coped with the intellectual attack on the "social democratic consensus" by a mixture of limited concessions and organized old-guard resistance. The Dutch party of Labor appears to have largely succumbed to the attack.

The British Labour party is a case apart, because of the organizational separation between the collectively affiliated trade unions and the constituency units based on individual membership. Many of the latter always contained strong non-working-class elements, and most of them now appear to have been taken over by a militant New Left under

strong Trotskyist influence. At the same time the bitter wage conflicts, brought about by inflation and in turn reinforcing it, have generated a militancy of a different kind in the trade unions. The combination of these two processes has resulted not only in the recent adoption of an extremist platform by the party's conference and executive, but in an effort to force this policy and a corresponding new leadership upon the party's parliamentary group, whose majority still feels responsible to the electorate that sent them to Westminster on quite a different platform. By now a group of outstanding representatives of the "social democratic consensus" have broken away from the party, demonstratively adopting the name of Social Democrats, while others fight on inside the old party in the hope of reversing the verdict at the next party conference.

The common denominator of those developments is that the combination of economic hardship and penetration by intellectual doctrinaires creates situations in which organized activist minorities can try to take over social democratic parties by manipulating inner-

party democracy for policies far different from the "social democratic consensus." Sometimes they succeed, with the predictable result of electoral defeat. A striking analogy in American terms is offered by the organizational reform of the Democratic party achieved, under the impact of the Vietnam War, between 1968 and 1972—which produced the McGovern candidacy and its failure. In the U.S. as in Europe, the contrast between the results of an inner-party democracy influenced by strong contingents of ideological activists and the requirements of success in a democratic election is evident.

It would be unjust, on the other hand, to pretend that the mass influx of young intellectuals into social democratic and broadly "liberal" parties (in the American sense of the term) had contributed nothing but sterile, doctrinaire extremism. Where the element of neo-Marxist revivalism was less prominent, this influx often has contributed a greater sensitivity to the new problems of our societies, particularly a greater awareness of ecological issues and of the responsibility of the industrially advanced nations toward the less developed part of the world. Thus in some cases, the discussion between the young intellectual newcomers and the old social democratic core may actually promote the adjustment of ideas needed for a new consensus.

Altogether, given both the erosion of the old consensus by the new economic problems and the inner-party strains caused by the changes in social composition and the new ideological inputs, the bulk of the social democratic parties have so far survived rather well. Some of them are still in power; most of them have a good chance to fight another day. A history of great achievements is not quickly forgotten in a crisis. If our analysis is correct, there is no reason why the current stagnation should lead mankind as deep down as did the interwar crisis, which led to Hitler's triumph and Hitler's war. The road to a new "social democratic consensus" based on old achievements and new insights for coping with the new problems is still open—if we have the clearheadedness, the patience, and the determination to take it. □

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

**has awarded its second annual
Bryant Spann Memorial Prize**

— to two authors: Jack Metzgar for his "Plant Shutdowns and Worker Response," *The Socialist Review* (Sept. - Oct. 1980), and Rod Davis for his "The Onion Revolt," *The Texas Observer* (Oct. 8, 1980).

The Bryant Spann Memorial Prize of \$750 will be awarded by the Eugene V. Debs Foundation in 1982 for the best article, published or unpublished, written in the Debsian tradition of social protest and reform.

For further details write to the Bryant Spann Memorial Prize Committee, c/o The Department of History, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. □

Roger Baldwin 1884 - 1981

Roger Baldwin was one of those extraordinary men who leave a permanent imprint on their society. His death at age 97 last summer left behind an America significantly more tolerant of dissent and more open to change *because* of his life's work than it would otherwise have been.

Baldwin's commitment to civil liberties did not stem from a general philosophical concern with the relations between the individual and society. He was always an activist who sought to combat the repression of individuals engaged in social struggles for objectives he shared. After an early career in the field of criminal probation and parole, his attention shifted to opposition to militarism as the United States drifted toward World War I. He focused on the specific problems of nonreligious conscientious objectors for whom no legal provision had been made in the draft law. In May 1917 he organized the Bureau for Conscientious Objectors as a subdivision of the American Union Against Militarism, and offered the Bureau's services to the War Department in dealing with these objectors to military service.

This offer, which was accepted, was characteristic of Baldwin's method of working; it was to set the ACLU "style" for years to come. Coming from good, solid WASP backgrounds, he and most of his close ACLU co-workers felt quite at home in dealing with government officials, even at the highest level, who happened to disagree on a specific policy. A handful of able attorneys could persuade the courts; and public opinion could be influenced by dramatic, well publicized statements or actions of important individuals. Once civil liberties law had been "made" by Supreme Court decisions, its day-to-day enforcement could be left to others. Thus Baldwin had little interest in building a mass civil liberties organization that could be available for grass-roots defense of individuals' rights or lobbying, though he was delighted to see the ACLU develop into such an organization in his lifetime.

Baldwin served a brief prison term for refusing to register for the draft. When he was released in June 1919, he spent a few months as a casual worker, riding the freights, washing dishes, and as a harvest hand. He was captivated by the free-wheeling militancy and inde-

pendence of the Wobblies, and deeply impressed by an Emma Goldman lecture. He decided that the focus of ACLU activity (it was founded in January 1920) should be to defend the rights of workers to organize. He urged that a majority of the ACLU board members should be "those directly engaged in the labor struggle who know the first-hand facts and who represent large constituencies . . ." (it didn't happen). Once again, he was brought to the defense of civil liberties as essential to a struggle in which it was a means rather than the end itself.

Baldwin has described himself, in his youth and early manhood, as "the supporter in spirit if not in fact of every force I thought headed for the abolition of poverty, the achievement of equality and the triumph of justice. . . ." This included a long period during which he combined a fierce defense of civil liberties in his own country with an uneasy apologia for the suppression of dissent in Russia and within the world Communist movement. Only after the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939 did Baldwin publicly recognize that the dream of equality and freedom, which had kindled the Russian Revolution, had been turned into the horror of totalitarianism.

This ambivalence he shared with a host of men and women of good will whose revulsion against inequality, the exploitation and suppression of workers, farmers, and radical movements in the capitalist world paralyzed their critical faculties with respect to its anticapitalist opponents.

For 30 years Roger Baldwin guided the ACLU, through the Palmer Raids, the labor struggles of the '20s and '30s, through World War II with its Japanese deportations, and the first decade of the cold war. He served as adviser on civil liberties to General MacArthur in Japan and General Clark in Germany. When he retired from the ACLU, it was to devote the rest of his life to advocating civil liberties in the international arena.

Roger Baldwin's tenacity, wit, intelligence, and fierce adherence to the cause of justice and freedom will be sorely missed by all of us who had the good luck to know him. He left us a more open society and a living organization to help keep it that way—the American Civil Liberties Union.

GORDON HASKELL □

“How Critical Is Our Condition?”

Four comments on Dennis Wrong's article in our last issue
— by Tom J. Farer, Mark Levinson, Seymour Martin Lipsit,
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. — with a reply by Dennis Wrong

Tom J. Farer

Dennis Wrong has written a modest essay, perhaps more modest than he realizes, on the future of egalitarian reform in America. In large measure he may be right, as far as he goes; whether he goes very far is another matter.

Wrong begins with the ominous announcement: “I do not recall a time when the prospects for the left in America have looked quite so dim.” The short-term prospect for reform has looked and has been awfully grim in the early years of every conservative epoch. To make his gambit interesting, therefore, Wrong must argue one or both of the following propositions:

- that unlike its predecessors, this conservative era will be one of profound regression rather than mere consolidation;
- that even if they do not manage to dismantle the welfare state, such as it is, our new conservative masters will achieve a record longevity and that we may, indeed, be present at the end of egalitarian reform as a powerful impulse in American politics.

If I interpret him correctly, no mean task, Wrong inclines toward the latter proposition only. Even with respect to it, his backing and filling leave a residue of doubt. He says at one point that “talk of 1980 as a ‘critical’ or ‘realigning’ election is wildly premature.” And toward the essay’s conclusion he quite fills the air with caveats: his pessimism relates to the “immediate prospect”; in the 1950s, a few years before a great new surge of reform, liberals had joined their opponents in the belief that group conflict over the distribution of

wealth and power was dead; that its historical weight gives liberalism an enormous cultural presence that cannot be readily exorcised, and that developments in other advanced capitalist states (including Mitterrand’s election and the diminishing body of Thatcherites) demonstrate the continued force of liberal-left ideas.

After all his equivocations, however, Wrong does plump for pessimism. Like all intellectual artifacts, his pessimism rests on a theory, in this instance the theory of the left’s autodiminution: that is, through its successful leavening of robber-baron capitalism, the left has progressively drained the pool of discontent on which it must draw for sustenance. The conservatives have always had enormous financial and organizational advantages. They have also benefited disproportionately from noneconomic issues. Hence, if a majority of the electorate is now “relatively satisfied” (Wrong’s phrase), the left now has nothing at all except a once successful dotard’s sweet memories.

Wrong may be right. The thesis achieves an initial tug of credibility and at least anecdotal support (for example, the South Dakota woman who, as she exchanged food stamps for groceries, told McGovern she would not vote for him because he had helped to give away the Panama Canal). But here as elsewhere in the essay imprecision provokes doubt. “Satisfaction” relative to what? To the average voter’s past economic state or to the present state of the under class?

The difference is fundamental. For if the average voter is satisfied now because he thinks he is

better off than he used to be, satisfaction should diminish as recollection fades and a new generation without any memory at all joins the electorate. Moreover, doldrums (like the ones we are now in) following a period of progress frustrate accrued expectations of continued good things and thus generate unusually intense hostility to the established order. Disappointed expectations already litter the scene. After 1945 home ownership became the norm for Americans. Today the National Association of Home Builders calculates that only 5 percent of the people in this country could qualify for a median priced home.

Conservatives are the initial beneficiaries of frustration because they have succeeded in portraying the status quo as the culmination of a liberal ascendancy. But if hard times continue under a conspicuously conservative Administration, how long can that theme work?

If, on the other hand, satisfaction arises from the relatively deprived state of racial and ethnic minorities, then conservative ascendancy might be maintained by cultivating fear of under-class ascension and middle-class descent. Particularly in conjunction with appeals to chauvinism and intolerance, this can be a formidable brew. The conservative parties of Weimar dispensed it with considerable success, in the meantime preparing the way for the Third Reich. In contemporary America the strategy is already being tested by the sort of *clerics* who lament affirmative action, bash homosexuals, and extol Third World fascists in the pages of *Commentary*.

Wrong, for all his determined moderation, raises the fascist specter only to leave it squatting—ugly, unattended and undefined—while he passes on to other things. Of course, one would like to know whether he sees it simply as a potentially aggravated case of majoritarian intolerance operating within established political structures or as a creeping coup d'état. Wrong offers not even a substantial hint about the circumstances in which whatever he means by fascism might materialize. Indeed he leaves us in doubt as to whether he takes the risk seriously. Its invocation implies concern. Nevertheless, by tying the threat exclusively to Moral Majority frenzy over the revolution in morals and then disparaging the notion that Reagan's majority wished to codify that frenzy, Wrong implies that there is little basis for concern.

AS LONG AS CONSERVATIVE ECONOMICS is the only game in town, concern will seem premature. But suppose Reaganomics' leap of faith demonstrably fails. And suppose the liberals counterattack from the left, opening a systematic assault on unearned inequality, demanding participation by workers and the public in the management of corporate enterprise, and challenging the cost-benefit ratio of an enormous military establishment. Then middle-American cultural *ressentiment* could coalesce with the practical anxieties and frustrations of soldiers and the owners and senior managers of capital. Under those conditions American politics could get very ugly indeed.

In no other Western capitalist state has capitalist ideology so completely penetrated popular consciousness. This ideological hegemony, together with steady growth and the welfare state, have muted class conflict despite one of the largest income disparities and most pinch-fisted welfare systems to be found among high-tech capitalist countries. Whether that hegemony can survive the frustrations of a slow-growth world and whether conservative remedies can restore regular income appreciation for the middle classes are questions central to the future of capitalism as we now experience it. The hysterical efforts of such intellectual fellow travelers as Gilder and Podhoretz to rationalize the status quo are a sign of right-wing pessimism about the prospect for affirmative answers.

If Wrong has little to say about the right, he has less to say about the left, and some of that little is wrong. The author alludes to great inequities requiring reform but says nothing about the shape such reforms could assume. Surely any useful assessment of the left's prospects must spring in part from an appreciation of what the left can offer to the various electoral clusters. To win again the left must come forward with a consistent program that seems likely both to reduce inequities and to mitigate difficulties, above all stagflation, which transcend class and ethnic groupings. One great unresolved issue is whether such a program can be conceived within the conventions of American politics about the distribution of income and wealth (about which nothing much is to be done) and about the control of corporate power (no significant participation by labor, government, or the general public in boards of directors) and

about foreign policy (American interests require a continuing effort to frustrate violent or revolutionary change everywhere in the Third World).

Does the author have a sufficiently clear picture of the left to address these matters? Wrong aggravates doubt about his understanding of the American left when in enumerating the shocks it has received since 1975 he includes "the revolt of the Polish workers under the banners of free trade unionism, Catholicism, and nationalism rather than for a vision of 'socialism with a human face.'" I do not think I am unusual among left-liberals in being heartened by the workers' revolt.

Why am I delighted? In the first place because I do not regard Poland or any other Warsaw Pact state as a "socialist" society. They are all frozen into ugly patterns of state capitalism or bureaucratic authoritarianism, call it what you will as long as you do not invoke the image of a democratic, relatively decentralized, society where economic and political democracy are mutually reinforcing, the image that occurs to most American

and West-European non-Communist leftists in association with the word "socialism." In the second place, because the revolt evidences the possibility of spontaneous action by workers, cooperating with dissident intellectuals, against repressive bureaucracy in an industrialized society. In the third place, because what Wrong passes off as a demand for free trade unionism is actually a radically broader demand for worker control or at least participation in decisions about investment and the selection of senior managements, for a more open society and for much greater equality.

And, finally, because it makes nonsense of the right's claim that right-wing dictatorships are always preferable to those spouting Leninist slogans because only the latter exercise an unassailable dominion.

The sum of the matter then is that while Dennis Wrong has opened the door to useful discussion about the future of egalitarian reform, he can number himself among those who have yet to walk in. □

Mark Levinson

That Reagan's victory and the accompanying purposeful, systemic, and mean-spirited attack on the welfare state signify difficult times for the left should be so obvious as not to require comment. But what does require a great deal of attention, and Dennis Wrong contributes notably to the discussion, is: Why did Reagan win? Does Reagan's victory signify a long-term shift in American politics toward conservatism? What are the implications for the left?

First, why did Reagan win? The best explanation, probably, is that his opponent was Jimmy Carter, easily the most conservative Democratic president in 50 years. Voters, being sensible people, often decide to vote for or against incumbents based on a judgment of their past performance. As Gary Orren and E. J. Dionne argue in *Working Papers* (May-June 1981), Reagan's victory can best be understood as a repudiation of Carter's performance in office. Carter simply for-

feited the one issue that, traditionally, the Democrats could count on: economics. Unfortunately, the deeper underlying problem was not just Jimmy Carter but rather the nature of New Deal liberalism and the principles on which it is based.

Post World War II liberalism was based on an economy that seemed to be expanding without visible limits. Liberalism was synonymous with the modern welfare state based on principles of Keynesian demand management of the economy. The spectacular performance of the American economy during this period led many to believe that conservatism was finished, and that the economic problems were solved. Indeed it was just 11 years ago that Paul Samuelson, Nobel Prize winner in economics, announced that the National Bureau of Economic Research had worked itself out of its first job—business cycles. But prosperity has given way to stagnation and traditional Keynesian fine tuning of the economy is no longer

adequate as a response to simultaneously increasing unemployment and inflation. (One wonders, as we slide into a recession, whether the economists at the NBER have not worked themselves into new jobs.)

Carter's almost total lack of program also helped Reagan by contributing to the perception that the Republican party was the party with ideas. Indeed it was! When you add to this crisis of liberal policy a very effective Republican candidate who quotes FDR and speaks proudly to workers about his days as a union president, we have the beginning of an explanation of Reagan's victory.

Does Reagan's victory signal a long-term shift toward conservatism? I doubt it. And if it does, it is not the conservatism of Reagan. Paul Weyrich, of the New Right's Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, put it this way:

1980 was not a watershed election. According to all the postelection surveys we've done, the people wanted change in this election. They haven't necessarily ratified what we stand for. We have this great opportunity in the next years to show that what we stand for works.

As is becoming increasingly clear, Reaganomics doesn't work; it is not even a coherent economic doctrine. It is a contradictory mixture of traditional conservative economics (whose primary concern is with balanced budgets); monetarism (which, through a policy of tight money, attempts to squeeze inflation out of the system no matter what the cost); the well-publicized supply-side economics (which postulates that a tax cut will increase investment and expand the economy, thus reducing inflation and eventually making up for the lost tax revenues).

Out of this amalgam a dilemma has arisen. Reagan has committed himself to huge tax cuts *and* increased military spending *and* a balanced budget. It's hard to think of three more incompatible goals. High interest rates have stifled the anticipated economic boom and inflation has gone into double digits. Not even the most ardent supply sider believes that a tax cut will stimulate real growth sufficiently to cure inflation. But other attempts to reduce inflation—for instance, tight money—lead to high interest rates, discouraging investment, which is what the tax cut was supposed to stimulate. As far as Wall Street is con-

cerned the emperor's clothes started disappearing months ago.

A word on the importance of social issues. Much has been written about the fact that Reagan's social conservatism on such issues as abortion and busing played a major role in his election. Undoubtedly, they did. But one reason for the seemingly increased importance of social issues in the 1980 elections is that Carter's economic failure gave social conservatives no reason to vote Democratic. (Dennis Wrong may be correct in tracing the origin of such groups as the Moral Majority to a backlash against social reform, but I think he greatly magnifies their importance. The Moral Majority is largely a media creation.)

While Reagan's economic program will not lead to economic prosperity, it will increase the inequality of income, make life more precarious for the poor and the old, increase hazards for working people, and foul up the environment. I suspect that if Reagan's foreign policy doesn't lead to disaster and if the world still exists in 1984, then Reagan (or the candidate that runs on his record) will be defeated—defeated for the same reason Reagan was elected. He will have to answer for promises of jobs and prosperity that were not delivered.

But here I agree with Dennis Wrong. The prospects for the left are a matter quite separate from the success or failure of the Reagan administration. For if Reagan's program fails, there is waiting in the wings a much more sophisticated kind of conservatism, more in tune with the problem of modern society and for that reason more dangerous. This brand of conservatism, calling itself a new liberalism, is best typified by Felix Rohatyn. His program, which explicitly states the need for centralized planning, is based on active government intervention in the economy to serve capital's needs. He proposes a Reconstruction Finance Corporation that would shore up ailing companies and rejuvenate regional economies. An important part of Rohatyn's program is the intent to discipline labor. The RFC would have the power to withhold investments until significant "concessions" could be extracted from labor "in the form of wage concessions and changes in work rules." The idea of a tripartite directorate of business, government, and labor (labor being, of course, the junior partner), planning in a most undemocratic

way the allocation of society's resources, is a frightening prospect.

TRADITIONAL NEW DEAL LIBERALISM is programmatically dead, but it is not yet clear what will replace it. We are now witnessing a contest that will decide the future of liberalism. Besides the corporatism of Rohatyn, there is the "new liberalism" of Gary Hart and Paul Tsongas. Their contradictory mixture of social liberalism and economic conservatism is bound to fail—indeed it amounts to little more than a watered-down version of Carterism.

On the other hand, liberals can take the advice offered by Robert Reich in the *New Republic* (February 21, 1981). He argued that the crisis of liberalism has reduced its call to social justice to

... something akin to charity, to be balanced against the more compelling goals of growth and productivity—a moral luxury to be afforded when and to the extent we can. At worst, it has become a demand for preserving economic relationships as they were when

times were better: controlling price increases, erecting tariffs and quotas against foreign imports, regulating factory closings and relocations, limiting direct investments abroad and investing public funds in dying industries. Without the promise of prosperity liberalism's argument to the majority has become a paeon to the status quo.

If liberalism is to regain ideological predominance during the 1980s it must reestablish a rational connection between prosperity and social justice. But it cannot do so by means of now discredited notions of aggregate demand management. Conservatives are right when they focus on the supply side of the economic ledger and ask what conditions will generate growth and productivity. It is their answer that is wrong, not their question.

The democratic left must be able to articulate a program of democratic planning for jobs and public control over investment. Until the democratic left can come up with workable programs in this vein, liberalism will continue to decline to being nothing more than a humane voice from the past, irrelevant for today's realities. □

Seymour Martin Lipset

The question posed by Dennis Wrong is whether Reagan's electoral victory in 1980 reflects a movement or a blip on the scorecard of history? To answer it requires the ability to predict both the short-range and long-term future of the American economy, along with the worldwide developments that affect these, an ability I lack.

A look at both American and Western electoral developments suggests that recent attempts to link election outcomes with economic performance are well founded.¹ Both Reagan and Mitterrand won for the same reason, the American and French economies each were experiencing high rates of inflation (12 percent) and unemployment (7-8 percent). In both nations, sufficient numbers of voters held the existing government responsible to elect the opposition by small majorities (51 percent

Reagan, 52 percent Mitterrand). Resentment about a declining British economy brought Margaret Thatcher to power in 1979 (although further economic disasters have reduced support for the Tories in the opinion polls to around 25 percent in 1981). Conversely, societies with prosperous and relatively price-stable economies have witnessed the reelection of their governments with increased majorities—the Socialists in Austria in 1979, the conservatives in Japan in 1980, and a Socialist-dominated coalition in Germany in 1980.²

Trying to account for changes in political con-

¹ Edward Tufte, *Political Control of the Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

² Only Israel has managed to confound this pattern. Skyrocketing inflation and increased unemployment did not prevent the reelection of a conservative government. But then Jews have always contradicted efforts to correlate economics with politics. In both Israel and the United States, the more well-to-do Jews are more inclined to back the left, while the poorer are more conservative.

trol within the context of national boundaries leads to parochial and oversimplified explanations. In both France and the United States, political commentators have emphasized the intellectual and policy weaknesses of the previously dominant tendency. American analysts, including many liberals and Democrats, point to the exhaustion of the intellectual capital of the left, of its continued reliance on what have become traditional responses to social and economic problems—more government intervention, more spending. Conservatives are credited with having the only original policy-relevant ideas and analyses.

But a perusal of the French press yields comparable commentaries from precisely the opposite perspective. The right is seen as intellectually bankrupt, as advocating more of the same outmoded policies, while the left is credited with innovation and more analytical sophistication. The victorious French left, of course, is identified with the extension of policies that, seemingly, were rejected in Britain in 1979 and the United States in 1980, an expansion of the welfare-planning-regulatory state. (In line with Dennis Wrong's criticism of the American left for "making a free gift to the right of the issue of resisting Soviet expansionism," it should be noted that François Mitterrand has taken a foreign-policy position close to that of Ronald Reagan. Calling attention to the fact that the deployment of a new generation of Soviet missiles and the development of the Backfire bomber by the Soviets have upset the military equilibrium, Mitterrand stated in Reaganite language, "I will not accept this, . . . we must arm to restore the balance. At that point, we should start negotiating."³)

IN ADDITION to the propensity to vote out the incumbents as a reaction to economic difficulties, there are other consistent changes occurring across national frontiers, which suggest that basic structural developments are affecting the bases of support for varying political forces. Wrong correctly calls attention to the "decline since 1945 in class voting" in the United States. Yet an examination of voting patterns on a comparative basis documents that "there has been a discernable decline in

class-linked voting across a number of advanced industrial countries."⁴ This decline is associated with a falloff in the proportion of the electorate identifying with a political party and reduced voting participation.

The decline in class voting is a result of two parallel developments. The first is the emergence of the postindustrial New Politics or New Left groups, whose roots are in the university, the scientific, and intellectual worlds, who are disproportionately represented in both the public sector and the professions, which have sizably increased the proportion of the middle class who vote left. Second, there has been a corresponding move to the right on the part of some workers who reject the social and cultural changes fostered by the New Politics left. The middle-class recruits to left politics, as Wrong notes, have pressed noneconomic or social causes—a cleaner environment, a better culture, a more permissive morality, particularly as affecting familial and sexual issues, and a change in the status of women and homosexuals. As affluent culturally concerned people, the supporters of the New Politics have voiced disdain for materialistic concerns, for economic growth and higher standards of living. Most workers, by contrast, remain interested in material questions. Less educated, less cosmopolitan, less affluent, less secure, they are also more traditional, discernably more conservative in their social views.⁵

The existing political parties have found it difficult to link positions on the social issues to their past socioeconomic bases of support and hence class correlations with voting, party loyalties, and rates of voting participation have declined. In effect, cross-pressures deriving from varying commitments to economic and social values have reduced the salience of loyalty to parties, previously tied to the structural sources of cleavage in industrial society.

Yet it would be an error to interpret recent American politics solely as a national expression of international patterns. Many of the factors that gave rise to American "exceptionalism," to the

³ Frank J. Prial, "New Mood is Foreseen for Paris-Bonn Meeting," *New York Times* (National edition), July 12, 1981, p. 4.

⁴ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981. Expanded Edition), pp. 504-505.

⁵ Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 21-98.

absence of a socialist movement, are still present.⁶ The United States still has the highest per capita income (controlled for real purchasing power) and standard of living in the developed world, and post-World War II economic growth and technological developments have fostered an increase in opportunity, in rates of social mobility.⁷ Not only is the correlation between class position and voting lower than at any time since election surveys were first taken, it is much below that of other industrialized nations.

More noteworthy as an indicator of the declining influence of class is the fact that the proportion of the nonagricultural labor force belonging to trade unions has fallen from around a third at the start of John F. Kennedy's term to about a fifth today. In the past four years unions have been losing a majority of National Labor Relations Board representation elections, in contrast to their ability to win most of them in all previous years. Unions are weaker in the United States than in other economically developed democracies.

Discussion of the evidence and factors relevant to a low level of class consciousness in America is, of course, basic to any analysis of American politics. But American intellectuals have for the most part ignored the impact of religiosity on the body politic. Both historical and contemporary evidence indicate that the United States is the most religious country in the Western world, Ireland apart. Americans are more disposed to believe in God, attest to the importance of religion in their lives, and attend church than the citizenry of any other economically developed society. And given

the special character of Christianity here, the fact that most Americans have adhered to Protestant denominations that never were state churches, while in other parts of Christendom state religions were dominant, Americans have been more prone to link moralistic concerns to political behavior than people elsewhere.

The moralistic reaction to the extensive cultural changes introduced in the 1960s and '70s, to which Dennis Wrong calls attention, has been centered in the more religious, more fundamentalist sectors of the population. As a result of structural changes, increased levels of urbanization and education, these groups are weaker today than any time in the past. They no longer can hope to dominate the country, but they are still sufficiently large (30 percent of Americans are born-again Christian) to have a significant impact. Disproportionately drawn from the less educated and poorer strata, they are torn politically between their socioeconomic interests, which press them to the left, and their religiously based moral values, which pull them to the right. To a considerable degree, therefore, how they vote depends on the larger circumstances under which an election is held. As moral concerns have become more salient than problems of unemployment, people have moved to the right politically.

It should be noted, however, that the evidence does not sustain the frequently voiced fear that the country is about to be captured by right-wing cultural extremists, organized in the Moral Majority and kindred groups. These are, in fact, quite small in membership and following and had little direct impact on the 1980 presidential and congressional elections.⁸ The available data suggest that the emergence of a political evangelical movement and the swing toward conservatism have been parallel developments, which have been mutually reinforcing rather than related in a cause-and-effect fashion. That is, the politicization of the evangelicals did not contribute much to the GOP victories, except possibly in the South where it probably helped to increase electoral participation, especially in the primaries. Economic and foreign-policy reversals pressed all segments of the American electorate to shift toward the Republi-

⁶ For an extensive discussion of the literature on the subject, see Seymour Martin Lipset, "Why No Socialism in the United States?" in Seweryn Bialer and Sophia Sluzar, eds., *Sources of Contemporary Radicalism* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 31-149, 346-63.

⁷ Various studies, which purport to show that the per capita income in the United States is below that of some Western European nations, have used direct equivalent monetary exchange rates for comparisons. Estimates based on actual purchasing power, however, show the United States still ahead by significant margins. See Irving B. Kravis, Alan Heston, and Robert Summers, *International Comparisons of Real Product and Purchasing Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 7-23; and Robert Summers, Irving B. Kravis, and Alan Heston, "International Comparison of Real Product and Its Composition: 1950-1977," *Review of Income and Wealth*, March 1980, pp. 34-66.

⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, "The Election and the Evangelicals," *Commentary*, March 1981, pp. 25-31.

cans, while challenges to traditional religiously linked values activated the political concerns of many fundamentalists.

THE MAJORITY SUPPORT accorded Ronald Reagan's efforts to carry out his platform of lower taxes and cutbacks in government welfare functions in the 1981 opinion polls suggests a strong receptivity for conservative policies. Yet the same pattern occurred in France following the election of Mitterrand and a Socialist majority in the Chamber. Endorsement of their program to nationalize more industries (raising the proportion from 12 to 16 percent) and to increase government spending for welfare purposes grew during the first few months after they took office. Seemingly, in both countries, people were initially disposed to give presidents of diametrically different orientations a chance to demonstrate that they can improve the economy. Yet it must be noted that continued economic difficulties have resulted in a fall-off in support for both presidents. French

polls reveal less than 50 percent approve of Mitterrand's performance in office as of October, while Reagan's disapproval rating, around 40 percent, is the highest any American president has received so early in his term.

Richard Scammon commented following the 1976 election that there is nothing wrong with the Republican party a 12 percent inflation rate will not cure. After the 1980 contest, he said, there is nothing wrong with the Democratic party that a significant increase in the unemployment rate will not repair. Modern electorates have a funny habit of reacting to the state of the economy. Whether Reagan's or Mitterrand's victories represent movements or blips will probably be determined by what happens to the world economy, as much or more than by their policies or the views of their populations on economic or cultural policies.⁹

⁹ For an elaboration on some of the themes discussed here see S. M. Lipset, "France's Warning to the Reagan Administration," *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, Fall 1981, pp. 35-38. □

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Am I alone in finding Mr. Wrong more pessimistic at the start of his paper than at the end? As he gets into his case, it seems to me, he argues himself out of a good deal of his preliminary gloom, thereby reducing the differences between us. Compare, for example, the first sentence of his piece with the last. In any event, I do dissent from his initial impression of the dimness of liberal prospects.

He offers several reasons for regarding these prospects as unprecedentedly grim—even though, as he readily concedes, Reagan won in 1980 with a much smaller proportion of the popular vote than Eisenhower received in 1952 or Nixon in 1972 (and far, far less than Harding in 1920).

One reason why Mr. Wrong thinks it all so different now is the emergence of the Moral Majority and the New Right, a phenomenon that, he claims, has "surprised" many liberals and left-

ists. I can't imagine why this phenomenon should have surprised anybody. If anything is predictable, it is that conservatism in its recurrent American waves should formulate itself on two levels—pretentious political and economic argumentation (the "New Era" philosophy of the 1920s, the "new conservatism" of the 1950s, the "neoconservatism" of the 1980s); and an evangelical social reaction from the grass roots. No one who remembers the fundamentalist campaigns of the 1920s to abolish liquor and Darwin, or the Norman Vincent Peale-Billy Graham essays in the 1950s in what Justice Jackson called "compulsory godliness," could conceivably have been surprised by the eruption of the Moral Majority in the next conservative period.

However, intellectual conservatism and social reaction have always been uneasy partners. Just as big businessmen and their acolytes in the 1920s

opposed prohibition and accepted evolution, so their counterparts today regard the passions of the Moral Majority as both distasteful and divisive—which is why Senator Baker, the Republican leader in the upper house, did his best to stave off congressional consideration of abortion, school prayer, and other Moral Majority issues. The more aggressive the Moral Majority becomes, the more it threatens to split the Reagan coalition. In short, the Moral Majority may well turn out to be a greater menace to conservatism than to liberalism.

Another of Mr. Wrong's grounds for pessimism is his fear that conservatism has captured foreign policy as a political issue, and that this will make a material difference in years to come. But every exit poll in 1980 showed domestic economic concerns, and not foreign policy, to have been decisive in electing Reagan. Moreover, one strongly doubts whether sending American boys abroad is going to be more of a vote-winning issue in the 1980s than, say, arms control. Certainly, as Mr. Wrong admits, General Haig's effort to make a big production out of El Salvador went down like a lead balloon.

Nor do the liberals seem to me so ill-equipped to deal with foreign policy. I share Mr. Wrong's dislike of sentimentalism about Cuba, China, Vietnam, and the Third World. But this, as he concedes, is characteristic of the New Left, not of serious American liberalism. I guess I agree with Mr. Wrong about the draft; so perhaps do more liberals than he thinks. I do not see undue difficulty in the Democratic party's establishing a position between the rigid and frenetic anticommunism of the Reagan administration and the guilt-ridden masochism of the New Left; and I would imagine that such a position would appeal to many more Americans than either extreme does.

Another of Mr. Wrong's reasons for gloom is his belief that there has been since 1945 "a long-run trend to the right" as expressed in the decline in class voting and in the shrinkage of the reservoir of "social and economic underdogs." It has often been observed, of course, that the New Deal has been undone by its own success. As Murray Kempton once said, the children have devoured the revolution. Yet the process has surely moved the whole nation to the left. Even in this age of rampant conservatism polls consistently report formidable national majorities in favor of govern-

ment as the employer of last resort, of national health insurance, of mandatory price and wage controls. The evidence is ambiguous, but it can equally justify a description of "a long-term trend to the left."

I think that Mr. Wrong is committing the sociologist's fallacy in erecting a formidable structural explanation of the early Reagan successes. As Emerson wisely said, "In analysing history, do not be too profound, for often the causes are quite superficial." Beware of "deep" explanations! Only a short time ago, for example, political scientists were learnedly arguing that the American presidency was in inevitable decline as a result of the fragmented and uncontrollable Congress, the decomposing political parties, the powerful lobbies, the fanatical single-issue movements, and so forth. Historians, more simply-mindedly, thought the salience of these factors was not the cause but the consequence of the failure of presidential leadership, and that there was little wrong with the presidency that a competent man in the White House could not cure. After Reagan's triumphs in Congress last spring, we have heard little about the inevitable decline of the presidency.

FOR THE SAME REASON let us not get too complicated about the future of liberalism. If Reagan's economic remedies should by some miracle work, if they should succeed in stabilizing prices, reducing interest rates, and stimulating employment, then conservatism will be in the saddle for a considerable time. But Mr. Wrong agrees, I gather, that it would take a miracle to produce this result. The far more probable result of increasing inflation, interest rates, and unemployment, of deteriorating services and spreading poverty, will bring about a marvelous change in public attitudes, even in Sunbelt attitudes, toward government intervention in the economy. Nor need we worry then about a shortage of underdogs nor about the absence of discontented groups capable of sparking a new turn to the left.

Mr. Wrong is right to warn that the new turn might, as a theoretical possibility, be toward big business "corporatist" planning. Still few big businessmen are so intelligent and imaginative as Felix Rohatyn, and the Democratic party, with its Galbraithian economists, its Califanoesque managers, and its labor leaders, remains far more likely than the Republican party to become the vehicle of

policies of economic coordination. Mr. Wrong may possibly be correct in saying that the Democrats cannot expect to win future elections if they make the interests of the poor and the minorities their primary cause, though even this need not be true if we ever regained a plateau of middle-class affluence.

But the resort to affirmative government to bring about economic coordination, and especially to deal with the problems of inflation and energy, necessarily involves system-wide policies along lines that Galbraith, Rohatyn, and others have been proposing for a considerable time. In view of Reagan's notable success in making the Republicans more vividly the party of the rich than it has seemed since the days of Coolidge, Hoover, and Andrew Mellon, the Democrats can hardly avoid becoming once again the party of the general welfare.

Emerson's warning against being too profound also applies, it seems to me, to theorizing about the

"causal explanation" of the cyclical rhythms in our politics. Mr. Wrong's own "explanation sketch" has the cycles turn on the conflict between egalitarianism and patriotism/evangelism. But this sketch is surely historically deficient. It takes its color from the present conservative resurgence, but it explains neither the conservatism of the 1920s (when William Jennings Bryan and the fundamentalists were mostly Democrats) nor the conservatism of the 1950s. I continue to prefer the more simpleminded explanation—that, after a season of action, passion, idealism, and reform, a country simply gets worn out, longs for respite, retreats from responsibility, and enters into a season of drift, hedonism, cynicism, and laissez-faire. Often the causes of things are quite superficial.

So I urge Dennis Wrong not to despair. When the invisible hand fails to relieve our problems, the country will make a new try at taking charge of its own economic destiny. And all this may take place sooner than we think. □

Dennis Wrong Replies

All four critics think that I overestimate the long-range significance of Reagan's election. Lipset and Schlesinger write as if I had consigned the Democratic party to permanent minority status, but the question of which party wins the next election or the one after was not my major concern. Doubts about the creation or recreation of a politically powerful and effective left-liberal coalition were the crux of my argument rather than insistence on the depth and tenacity of the tides of opinion that elected Reagan. My purpose was to examine some dispiriting possibilities running counter to the conventional formulas and pieties of the American left. If toward the end of the article I strike a somewhat more upbeat note, my closing declaration of faith in the weight of the American liberal tradition leaves me more emotionally than intellectually satisfied.

Since I did not exclude the possibility that the Democrats might recapture the presidency in 1984, the important question is whether such an outcome would in itself amount to, or initiate, a renaissance of liberalism and the left. I suggested that in policy terms a new Democratic adminis-

tration might resemble that of Carter, whom Schlesinger once called "the most conservative Democratic president since Cleveland," rather than the old welfare-state liberalism upheld by Senator Kennedy. Support for this view comes in a recent *Village Voice* interview from none other than Ralph Nader, who is certainly closer to the political scene than I am. Nader saw John Glenn as the most probable Democratic candidate in 1984 and was depressed by the prospect.

Schlesinger and Levinson concede my point that a Democratic return to office might not involve a restoration of the old liberalism when they acknowledge the appeal and relevance of the kind of corporatist planning associated with Felix Rohatyn. Schlesinger contemplates this with a certain equanimity, whereas Levinson sees it as "a frightening prospect." My own attitude is closer to Schlesinger's, if only because I think Rohatyn's proposals, reminiscent of the early New Deal, are probably the best we can hope for in the immediate future and are infinitely preferable to Reaganite half-baked supply-side economics, pinch-penny monetarism, and redistribution in favor of the rich.

I plead guilty to Schlesinger's charge that I am a sociologist predisposed to look for "deep" structural trends. I am enchanted, nevertheless, by his quotation from Emerson and intend to appropriate it to brandish in arguments with colleagues. Yet it surely applies more to events than to trends, to causes than to consequences, and the problem of historical understanding is largely to determine which is which. Schlesinger notes the movement of American politics to the left since the New Deal, which, far from denying, I referred to as "leftward drift" and saw as the outcome of what Lipset once called the "democratic class struggle." I tried to apply the idea of a cyclical left/right political rhythm to the present and found it no longer compelling, but scarcely because of the unprecedented potency of the Moral Majority, which resembles, I agree, past and ultimately unsuccessful traditionalist reactions against change and reform. There are, alas, more formidable obstacles to the continuation of the left/right rhythm of democratic politics.

Farer chides me for failing to present a "consistent program" for the left that might win elections. But my aim was not to lay out a possible political strategy but to try to foresee what seemed most likely to happen, a more modest task though not a simple one—hence the "caveats" and "equivocations" to which Farer takes exception. I am not much impressed with Farer's outline of such a program, which does no more than reiterate familiar left demands for greater equality, participation in corporate decision-making, and a more pacific foreign policy, and then tags on the requirement that "above all stagflation" must be mitigated. There is little evidence that the American electorate—or, indeed, any other electorate—is passionately aroused by relative inequalities in wealth and income or the absence of "workers' control" of industry. Reagan voters, especially the 44 percent of unionized workers among them, are unlikely to have doubted that any redistribution of income and power achieved by a Reagan administration would favor the rich and the corporations. Yet enough of them were willing to take a chance that his touted economic program would restore prosperity and check inflation, just as the electorate in the 1930s was ready to give Roosevelt's reforms a chance. Skepticism as to whether a left program of "soaking the rich," placing workers on corporate boards, and cutting defense spending would restore the economy and appease the Soviet Union

need not indicate subjection to capitalist "ideological hegemony"—my nomination for the most self-deluding (and self-serving) fashionable cliché favored by left-wing intellectuals in the past decade.

FARER'S BELIEF that the left will rise again rests on a curious combination of the classical economists' idea of the "insatiability of human wants" and the sociologists' concept of "relative deprivation." He thinks that present standards for assessing the latter will dissolve and the former will reassert itself. Yet liberals and radicals as different as Galbraith, Marcuse, and Daniel Bell have questioned the universality, even in America, of ever-rising expectations; the rejection of materialism in favor of noneconomic values by trend-setting "postindustrial" elites is noted by Lipset, although I think he exaggerates its depth. But why should home ownership, a quintessentially "bourgeois" value if there ever was one, be regarded as an unchanging aspiration of Americans, let alone one whose frustration will move them to the left? Americans have, after all, increasingly abandoned the norm of lifelong monogamous marriage, so why should they cling to a goal of home ownership closely tied to it?

On the other hand, Farer thinks blocked expectations may move many Americans far to the right. If Levinson, Lipset, and Schlesinger think I make too much of the Moral Majority and the New Right, he charges me with not taking seriously enough the "fascist potential" I attributed to them. He conjures up for the umpteenth time the old fantasy of an American reenactment of Weimar. Since he locates it at several removes from the present, his version is even less convincing than those popular in the early 1950s and again in the late 1960s. The emergence of a powerful antimilitarist and anticapitalist left may, he argues, arouse a fascist response on the right. Since I foresaw no such trend to the left, why should I be expected to pyramid improbabilities by speculating about a full-fledged fascism? Moreover, Farer seems to think this polarization of a socialist left against a fascist right could develop even if the economy does no more than remain in its present "doldrums." A depression on the scale of the 1930s or a military defeat like Germany's in 1918 might conceivably lead to a situation as threatening as the last years of Weimar, but that is to consider a few additional improbabilities. I'm not *that* pessimistic!

I mentioned the Polish workers' revolt as one of a series of events that had since 1975 disillusioned "American radicals nurtured by the New Left of the 1960s." It is Farer's business if he sees this as a description of himself, but the category is certainly not inclusive of the "left-liberals" or "most American and West-European non-Communist leftists" to whom he then refers. Admittedly, the Polish revolt differs from the other events I listed in that it posed no direct challenge to prevailing political sentiments, the New Left never having vested its hopes in the Soviet and East European Communist states—that is, after all, what was supposed to be "new" about it. Yet I doubt that I am alone in detecting a certain uneasiness in some radical circles over the Polish workers' preference for religious and national rather than "class-conscious" socialist symbols, as well as over the further dissipation of the spirit of détente resulting from their brave challenge to Soviet power. At the time I wrote, Solidarity had avoided demands for workers' control, which have since been forcefully raised by the rank-and-file membership against the leaders' more cautious advice in what is obvi-

ously a highly fluid, even revolutionary, situation. Farer is free to define "socialism" as an unsullied ideal independent of all "actually existing socialisms" (in Rudolph Bahro's phrase) and I, too, find his ideal attractive. But he surely cannot be unaware that, virtually since 1917, the record of any and all of the regimes calling themselves "socialist" has been a far greater obstacle to the success of socialist parties and movements in the democratic world than any alleged penetration of "popular consciousness" by "capitalist ideology."

Political terminology should be chosen with care. Farer thinks fascism is the result of the "frustrations of soldiers and the owners and managers of capital," he regards right-wing dictatorships in the "Third World" as fascist, and he is prepared to describe the Soviet Union and its Warsaw pact satellites as "state capitalist" (what about China, Cuba, and Vietnam?). In short, he tells us that most of the evil and tyrannical regimes of the past half-century—Hitler's, Stalin's, Mussolini's, and military dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere—are manifestations of capitalism. Does he really believe this? □



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Fred Siegel

Who Is Like Unto Ike?

Eisenhower in the Age of Reagan

EISENHOWER AND THE COLD WAR, by Robert Divine. New York: Oxford University Press. 155 pp. \$14.95.

EISENHOWER THE PRESIDENT: CRUCIAL DAYS, 1951-1960, by William Bragg Ewald, Jr. Englewood, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 324 pp. \$12.95.

THE EISENHOWER DIARIES, edited by Robert Ferrell. New York: W. W. Norton. 362 pp. \$19.95.

THE DECLASSIFIED EISENHOWER: A DIVIDED LEGACY OF PEACE AND POLITICAL WARFARE, by Blanche Wiesen Cook. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday. 251 pp. \$15.95.

IKE'S SPIES: EISENHOWER AND THE ESPIONAGE ESTABLISHMENT, by Stephen Ambrose. Doubleday. 322 pp. \$14.95.

The treatment of Eisenhower by historians has become as interesting as the history of his presidency per se. Revisionists looking back on his Administration through the prisms of Vietnam, the collapse of the Great Society, and double-digit inflation have discovered a new heroic Ike, a man of quiet wisdom. Stepping straight from the pages of his own memoirs, this Ike was the last president to serve two full terms, a man who extricated America from Korea and prevented us from going into Indochina, while keeping the economy in tune with a mere 1.5 percent inflation.

"Vital-Center" liberals joked about the Eisenhower doll, wind it up and it does nothing. They disparaged his lack of intellect, his bumbling delivery, his country-club friends. Wrong, said the first Eisenhower revisionists, journalists writing in the late '60s. They claim Eisenhower was a canny politician. "It was the purpose of his existence," wrote Murray Kempton, "never to be seen in what he did. . . . No thought was to be uttered undisguised. . . . Even the syntax was an instrument." Garry Wills even saw Eisenhower as a political genius. Ike, he claimed, only appeared to be doing nothing. In fact, he hid his activity because he had "the true professional's instinct for making things look easy."

This view of Eisenhower's political skills was a prelude to the reevaluation of his foreign policy. Vital-Center liberals and socialists criticized Eisenhower for his nuclear brinksmanship. They claimed that his bondage to big business led America to abandon its democratic ideals in pursuit of indiscriminate alliances with petty dictators mouthing pieties of free enterprise. The revisionists Stephen Ambrose (*Ike's Spies*), Robert Divine (*Eisenhower and the Cold War*), and Barton Bernstein stand the Vital-Center view on its head. They praised Eisenhower as a cunning man of peace whose threats of nuclear assault brought peace to Korea, and later avoided war over Quemoy and Matsu. Brinksmanship, they argue, was a clever ploy to keep the enemy guessing while avoiding the need to commit land troops to Asia. As for his bondage to big business, that too was a plus; businessmen's concern with budget deficits at home forestalled military adventures abroad.

What happened to people like Nixon, Dulles, and McCarthy, you might ask? Well they disappear to the margins of this story. Yes, it's true that Nixon alliterated about "Adlai the appeaser" with a "Ph.D. from Dean Acheson's College of Cowardly Communist Containment," and Dulles did rant on about atheistic Communists and God-

fearing allies, but the revisionists have an answer for this. Nixon and Dulles were simply used by Eisenhower as talismans against the witch hunters of the Republican right. As for McCarthy, it's true the Wisconsin demagogue reached the heights of his popularity under Eisenhower, but then the wise leader cleverly cut him down to size by ignoring him. Civil rights? Well, here too it seems the liberals were mistaken. The new Eisenhower believed deeply in civil rights but, concerned with maintaining a broad base of support for reform and staying within Constitutional limits, he decided to move slowly. Among revisionist academics at least we're a long way from the Herblock cartoons that depicted a well-meaning simpleton taken in by John Foster Dulles.

Every president is a hero to someone; even Calvin Coolidge has been making a comeback. What's important is that Eisenhower has become a hero of sorts to some liberal and leftist writers and historians. The case for Eisenhower made first by William Appleman Williams and now by Robert Divine in his brief *Eisenhower and the Cold War* boils down to one word: "prudence." Or, as Williams puts it, "... he [Ike] alone cooled [the Cold War] down." For these historians, it is Eisenhower's sense of proportion that separates Ike the Good from Truman the Bad. This good sense, they say, kept him from dragging the country into the kind of disastrous foreign involvements concocted by his liberal predecessor Truman and successor Kennedy.

The argument makes little sense. Rhetoric aside, Eisenhower's foreign policy was Truman's foreign policy. Truman and Eisenhower collaborated in creating NATO and in defending internationalism. When, in January of 1951, an unpopular Truman faced problems with Congress, Eisenhower went on radio and TV to win support for Truman's plan to send arms and men to Europe. If anything, Eisenhower was critical of Truman for exactly those qualities that had led the revisionists to praise the general at the expense of the haberdasher. Eisenhower was an intemperate admirer of Truman's hard-line Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, who criticized Truman for being too soft with the Russians. When the unstable Forrestal killed himself in July of '49, Eisenhower mourned him deeply and rebuked the Democrats in his private diary. "He [Forrestal] insisted [back in '44 and '45] they [the Russians] hated us, which I had reason to believe myself, I still do now, everybody does. Moreover, those who were then asleep are now professional patriots and Russian haters." Eisenhower complained that Truman's penny-

pinching policies were keeping the army dangerously weak; later he suggested that the Korean War might never have taken place if Truman had not kept American forces at a dangerously low level.

WHAT IS STRIKING about Eisenhower is that he did so little with the freedom of action he enjoyed as a Republican facing a post-Stalinist leadership, interested for its own reasons in an accommodation with the United States. From 1953 to 1956, the years of the so-called "Thaw" inside Russia, the Soviets made numerous overtures aimed at reducing tensions. The Austrian Treaty and the Finnish accommodation were instances of a modified Russian position. But despite these concrete developments, the Eisenhower administration either refused to talk with the Russians or responded with such propaganda charades as Open Skies and Atoms for Peace proposals. Eisenhower insisted, much in the manner of Reagan today, that it simply wasn't possible to discuss substantive matters with godless Communists.

The new praise for such an Administration is based on a double standard. Revisionists such as Barton Bernstein have been keen on showing the connections between Truman's foreign policy and the Red Scare at home. The Truman Doctrine and the executive loyalty program, they note, were announced within ten days of each other. They justly condemn Truman for "scaring the hell out of the American people" to gain his ill-advised Truman Doctrine. Eisenhower, on the other hand, is praised because Dulles's far more exaggerated rhetoric served in Bernstein's words "valuable domestic political functions." Truman is condemned as being unconscionably aggressive, but Eisenhower is praised for threatening nuclear war in "defense" of those invaluable islands, Quemoy and Matsu. We can only imagine what such even-handed historians would have suggested if Truman, like Eisenhower, had answered a reporter's query about the use of atomic weapons during the 1955 confrontation with China by commenting, "I see no reasons why they [nuclear weapons] shouldn't be used exactly as you use a bullet or anything else!"

If Eisenhower is to be praised for his prudence and his concern that excessive military expenditure was a threat to the economy, should he not be condemned for his brinksmanship, rhetorical and real, which kept the nation on the thin edge of hysteria for much of his first term even as the Russians waxed conciliatory? So it might seem, but a great deal of the revisionist interpretation depends on compartmentalizing Eisenhower's im-

pact. Divine, for instance, makes no mention of the way Dulles gutted the State Department, riding it of the liberal experts on Asia who might have been able to stand in the way of our Vietnam "adventure." It was under Eisenhower and not Kennedy that U.S. foreign policy first viewed Third World countries not as nations with unique histories but as characterless ciphers, to be filled in by either free enterprise or communism.

Finally, the idea of Eisenhower's foreign policy as a success depends on your time frame. The Bay of Pigs planned in his Administration blew up in Kennedy's. In Asia the Administration truckled to Chiang and the China lobby. Eisenhower has been widely praised for refusing to intervene in Vietnam in 1954; less well known is the intervention that did take place, the support for Chiang's covert war against the mainland. That intervention kept the pot boiling in Asia even in the face of the Sino-Soviet split and led into a war in Vietnam directed at the Vietnamese surrogates of what were supposed to be Russia's Chinese puppets. Later, the retired president would serve, along with Acheson, on a "Citizen's Committee" in support of Johnson's Vietnam policies. And what of the Dulles brothers' master stroke—the 1953 coup in Iran? It took a quarter of a century to backfire; but it did.

The most curious case of revisionist Ike-onography is Blanche W. Cook's *The Declassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy of Peace and Political Warfare*. Cook opens by telling the reader that "after browsing through the public record" she concluded that "Eisenhower was the most undervalued and misunderstood statesman of the twentieth century." Thus forewarned, the reader is given a story of mistaken identity. The Good King (FDR) was succeeded by a false heir (Harry Truman). Mistaken for FDR's legatee, Truman was in fact, like most liberals, an incipient fascist in dove's clothing. But meanwhile the Roosevelt legacy of friendship with the Great Russian Peoples and their Peace-Loving Leaders was carried on by Dwight David Roosevelt or Franklin Delano Eisenhower who, unbeknown to the people at the time, was the true heir to the throne. But then a terrible thing happened: after resisting the imprecations of the capitalist warmongers sometime in 1948 (just when is never specified), Dwight David Roosevelt's mind was captured by a band of plutocrats who turned his once fair head away from the paths to friendship with our Russian brothers.

Whatever excuse there might have once been for the idea of a captive president was undercut when the Eisenhower private papers were opened in the mid-'70s. Eisenhower's sporadic notes to

himself, now collected by Robert Ferrell as *The Eisenhower Diaries*, make it clear that Eisenhower's political and military ideas were fully developed long before his supposed capture. The entries for 1945 and 1946 show that he was already a harsh economic conservative and a foreign policy hawk in tune with the drift of the Truman administration's stance toward Russia.

HOW THEN EXPLAIN this new-found devotion to Eisenhower? I suspect it originates with a version of the '60s cry that the liberals are the REAL ENEMY and its historiographic corollary, "anyone but Truman." In recent years Robert Taft, Henry Wallace, and now Eisenhower have been held up by some historians as shining alternatives. The most extreme version of the Truman as devil theory takes the form of Garry Wills the ex-Buckleyite and Lillian Hellman the ex-Stalinist teaming up

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(in *Scoundrel Time*) to argue that Truman, and Truman alone, was responsible for the evils of the Cold War. There is an important difference, however, between this version of “liberals are the real enemy” and its ’60s predecessor. In the 1960s the complaint was that domestically the liberals were hopelessly timid. Now the liberals are pilloried for being excessively interventionist at home and abroad. Far better, they say, to stand with the golfer, a fellow who didn’t try to do too much and therefore didn’t do too much harm.

History is most relevant for the present when it is most faithful to the past. Of all the new books on Eisenhower, the most valuable is the most faithful, William Bragg Ewald’s *Eisenhower the President*. Ewald, a professor of English, was part of the Eisenhower administration and then assisted the ex-president in writing his memoirs. The book is filled with insider anecdotal jewels like the account of how Eisenhower seriously considered breaking the Catholic barrier by making a conservative Democrat, Governor Frank Lausche of Ohio, his running mate in 1956. Ewald’s volume lends support to the arguments of such scholars as Robert Griffith and Richard Immerman,* who suggest that the Eisenhower administration should make us reconsider our ideas of what constitutes an activist presidency.

We have fixed in our minds the tableau of the vigorous FDR standing astride the fallen figure of Herbert Hoover. But Hoover was as convinced as FDR that planning is crucial to a modern economy. Hoover the “Great Engineer” was by no means a dogmatic free marketeer. He wanted to replace the chaos of the market with private technical expertise and voluntary corporate planning. He envisioned a private but rationalized economy run by skilled managers. The issue then was not whether there would be active planning of the economy, but who would do it—the private sector or the government?

Eisenhower was just the kind of skilled manager

Hoover had in mind. Eisenhower had made his military reputation not as a field commander but as organizer of vast military enterprises like the invasion of Normandy. “Ike,” in the words of Robert Griffith, “was a product of the organizational revolution which had transformed American life in the twentieth century, a member of the new managerial class which led the great public and private bureaucracies that dominated the nation.” He was a skillful manager of men, a tactful compromiser who always emphasized “teamwork.” What Eisenhower had in mind was a managerial leadership that would exercise its authority through “a beautifully interlocked, smoothworking mechanism.”

Eisenhower was heavily influenced by Hoover, a man he “admired extravagantly.” “Ike” was capable of being every bit as callous as Hoover, as when he dismissed the economic fears of working America with the taunt, “If all that Americans want is security they can go to prison.” He could get up on his high horse when it came to direct government action; he described federal money for colleges as “immoral,” warning that such a policy would “lead to statism and, therefore, slavery.”

EISENHOWER’S STATUS as a war hero, his staunchly conservative sentiments, and his ideas for a voluntarily regulated corporate economy made him enormously appealing to the postwar leaders of big business, who feared further extensions of the New Deal. “If business failed to plan for the postwar world,” warned Paul Hoffman, a leading Eisenhower booster, “the government will be forced to stop and *collectivism will come to America by default rather than design.*”

Eisenhower, like Reagan, felt most at home in the company of wealthy and powerful men. Eisenhower had a contempt for the disorder of political competition and he loathed what he saw as the petty selfishness of the masses. Politicians catering to that selfishness, he argued, produced “the handout state” which threatened the freedom of the enterprising. Reacting to his critics during the flap over Charles Wilson, he snapped, “Whom would you rather have in charge of the Department of Defense, some failure who never did anything or a successful businessman?”

Eisenhower’s economic and political views suggest why, despite his overwhelming electoral mandate and enormous popularity, he refused to speak out against McCarthy. His diaries are filled with apocalyptic warnings about how the “preser-

*Robert Griffith, “Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth: An Interpretation of the Presidency and His Presidency,” forthcoming, *American Historical Review*. The Griffith article is by far the most insightful general discussion of the Eisenhower presidency to date.

Richard Immerman, *They Cried Wolf: The U.S. in Guatemala* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, forthcoming). The title refers to the way Eisenhower cried communism to justify the overthrow of the Arbenz reform government in Guatemala. Immerman’s carefully wrought study provides an important backdrop both for Castroism and the current crisis in Central America.

vation of freedom" is threatened by the "internal Munichs" of union victories in the coal fields and the "paternalism," "dictatorship," and "creeping socialism" of the New Deal.

The diaries make it clear that while Eisenhower was genuinely reluctant to run for the presidency, he finally did so only because he felt that perhaps he alone could save the country from the perfidy of "creeping socialism." Eisenhower never interfered with McCarthy because he fundamentally agreed with him. McCarthy, for all his partisan vulgarity, was useful, at least initially, because he had the New Dealers on the run.

In his memoirs Eisenhower explained how his critics were really only self-seekers or jackals. He presented himself as a man of extraordinary wisdom who had handled each and every crisis courageously, morally and, of course, successfully. We expect that sort of rhetoric from a memoirist, but we demand more of historians. The Eisenhower revisionists seem to think that because the academic reputations of Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson have sunk, it is necessary to raise those of first Hoover and now Eisenhower. Nixon awaits his turn, but I suspect that before long William Appleman Williams, the godfather of revisionism, will elaborate on his hints that the Nixon/Kissinger foreign policy represented a potentially liberating break from Cold War orthodoxy.

There is a tiresome similarity to the techniques of revisionism. What are seen as the admirable qualities of the revisee are torn from their context, polished and magnified. Thus a new academic construct, the revised Eisenhower, a man whose pure hands are never seen touching the leprous skin of the Nixons and Dulleses who surrounded him. The non-historian Alexander Haig probably came far closer to the genuine historical impact of the Eisenhower presidency when he announced that he wanted to follow in Dulles's glorious footsteps. He, too, wanted to be the "vicar" of foreign policy. □

To Our Contributors

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Alexander Rabinowitch

Why Has Liberalism Failed In Russia?

RUSSIA'S FAILED REVOLUTIONS: FROM THE DECEMBRISTS TO THE DISSIDENTS, by Adam B. Ulam. New York: Basic Books. 453 pp. \$18.95.

In *Russia's Failed Revolutions*, Adam B. Ulam sets for himself the task of determining why Western-style liberalism failed to become established in Russia, or, as he puts it, "What was it that at decisive moments has frustrated or flawed the libertarian intentions of Russia's revolutionaries and reformers?" In seeking the answer to this problem, Ulam looks to the peculiar nature of Russian nationalism. The greatness, unity, and power of the Russian Empire were, in his view, of supreme concern to Russia's revolutionaries and reformers, as well as to its governments. At critical junctures, the opposition turned away from political freedom and liberal institutions because they were seen as incompatible with national strength.

The book begins with an account of the Decembrist rebellion of 1825. Substantial chapters are devoted to the origins of radical and populist movements in the 1860s and 1870s, the revolution of 1905, the Duma period, the February 1917 revolution, and the October revolution. A brief concluding chapter characterizes the nature of Soviet rule during and after Stalin and compares the role of 19th-century revolutionaries and reformers with that of today's dissidents.

The rebellion of the Decembrists is one of the more familiar episodes in modern Russian history, immortalized in the writings of Pushkin, Nekrasov, and Tolstoy. Ulam's examination of the rebellion is engrossing. While he tends to consider participants in the movement, as indeed virtually all Russian revolutionaries and reformers, to be immature misfits of one kind or another, he draws insightful portraits of the leading Decembrists. He describes in a compelling way the activities of the various secret societies and the behavior of key Decembrists during the rebellion on December 14, 1825. On that fateful day, and in the immediately succeeding days, there were numerous tragicomic

episodes, as when Prince Serge Trubetskoy, designated to direct operations against the government, wandered aimlessly in the streets and then, panic stricken, hid out in the Austrian embassy, or when three of the Decembrists on the scaffold, too heavy for their ropes, survived an initial attempt to hang them. In the free, colorful style that has made all of his books a pleasure to read, Ulam makes the most of each dramatic moment.

Less valuable is his treatment of the populist movement of the 1860s and 1870s. Here the potential interest is undercut by the absence of meaningful discussion of two episodes of central concern to his theme: the "Going to the People" movement of 1874 and 1875, when over a thousand young Populists went out into the countryside to preach socialism, only to be rebuffed by the naturally suspicious peasantry, and the subsequent terrorist campaign directed by the People's Will, which in March 1881 culminated in the assassination of Czar Alexander II. It may be that this vital portion of the story was omitted because these episodes were the central focus of one of Ulam's previous books, on Russian populism, *In the Name of the People*. Nonetheless, with such key elements left out, readers of *Russia's Failed Revolutions* receive an unbalanced sense of events. That the revolutionaries' overriding concern for Russian strength caused them to back away from democratic principles is stated as a conclusion to this chapter, but this theme is not explicitly related to the aims and outlooks of the individuals and groups here considered.

Weaknesses of a more fundamental kind undermine the treatment of the 1917 revolutions. As nearly as one can tell—there is no bibliography, and footnoting is skimpy and unsystematic—the account is based on a relatively small number of long-familiar memoirs and document compilations, most of them published in the 1920s and early 1930s. In the construction of the narrative, focused mainly on politics at the top, consideration has not been taken of the large body of recent scholarship on the period, in which attention has been centered on the social history of the time.

PIONEERING ESSAYS published in the *Slavic Review* in the mid-1960s by Leopold Haimson illuminated the potentially explosive political and social tensions festering in Russian cities on the eve of the war and stimulated interest among graduate students in a number of American universities and abroad in the history of Russian labor and in the application of social science methodology to the

study of Russian society. Subsequent related research by Haimson, and by his doctoral students, has shed new light on virtually all major political and social groups and institutions in the pre-World War I period. Research by Oliver Radkey (*The Agrarian Foes of Bolshevism*), William G. Rosenberg (*Liberals in the Russian Revolution: The Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917-1921*), and Paul Avrich (*The Russian Anarchists*) has clarified the history of the Socialist Revolutionary and Kadet parties and of the Anarchists of 1917. In *Prelude to Revolution*, I examined internal divisions within the Bolshevik party in the aftermath of the February revolution, and the party's role in the abortive July uprising.

The Baku Commune, 1917-1918, by Ronald G. Suny, has helped encourage interest in the development of the revolution in other provincial cities and among minorities. The evolution of mass organizations—soviets, trade unions, factory committees, and the like—and the course of the social revolution in both urban and rural Russia are the focus of *The Russian Revolution* by John Keep. The impact of the "revolution from below" of ordinary citizens upon Bolshevik strategy and upon the party's success in 1917 is studied in my book *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*. The first volume of a two-part study of the Russian army in 1917 by Allan Wildman (*The End of the Russian Imperial Army*) has provided important new insights into the political behavior of Russian soldiers during and after the February revolution. Historians in the Soviet Union have produced significant monographs on the course of the revolutions that are mandatory reading for all serious students in the field.

With one minor exception, there is no indication that Ulam has drawn upon or taken into consideration the conclusions of the scholarly works listed above, many of which differ fundamentally from his. Nor does it appear that the book is based on significant primary research.

In a passage that illustrates Ulam's conception of the revolution and its result Ulam writes: "For all the historian's predilection to ascribe great events to social and economic causes transcending personalities, the course of the revolution was indeed determined by the qualities and deficiencies of a handful of people." Predictably, then, what we have is a montage of personalities and episodes with relatively little attention paid to the underlying social and economic processes. On point after point, Ulam's assertions run counter to existing evidence. It is said, for example, that the

policies of the Bolsheviks between 1903 and 1914 had brought the party to the verge of extinction as a serious political force, although Haimson finds that a Bolshevik resurgence had taken place between 1912 and 1914. Ulam asserts that on the eve of the February revolution “among the bulk of the frontline troops, morale stood quite high,” but Wildman has shown conclusively that at the time the disintegration of the Czarist army was already well advanced. From Ulam one gets no sense of the ways in which popular attitudes acted as a constraint on political leaders. Major developments of considerable complexity are oversimplified and even the sequence of important events, now precisely established, is confused. This is the case with the reconstruction of occurrences during the July and October days.

Indeed, the crucial period between the February and October revolutions appear as no less a tragedy than the Decembrist rebellion. Virtually all of the important political figures of the time—Lvov, Miliukov, Kerensky, Kornilov, Chkheidze, Guchkov, Chernov, and Martov—are seen as fearful of exercising political power and are made to appear ludicrous or are dismissed variously as “hapless,” “inept,” “bewildered,” “befuddled,” or “strong on oratory and weak on practical politics.” Not a Robespierre or a Napoleon in the lot! The left Menshevik Sukhanov, upon whose recollections Ulam leans especially heavily, is “a representative of that breed of the Russian intelligent[sia] of whom it has been said that they knew about everything and could do nothing.”

For Ulam, lack of governmental authority imposed by the Provisional Government in Petrograd is quite enough to explain the deepening of the revolution after February and the spread of revolutionary excesses to the provinces. The seizure of landlord estates by embittered peasants is brushed off as “occasional mayhem.” The Petrograd soviet, prototype for similar institutions of grass-roots democracy throughout the country and the possessor of considerable independent authority by virtue of the loyalty it commanded among ordinary citizens, emerges as simply a “pell-mell assembly,” a forum for “revolutionary pyrotechnics,” “addicted to the most common feature of all revolutions: endless, usually bombastic oratory.” Soldiers, “simple peasant lads befuddled by all that had been happening,” were essentially patriotic and “resolutely opposed to a peace without victory” until corrupted by Leninist propaganda. It does not seem to have occurred to Ulam that soldiers, workers, and peasants might have

had independent dissatisfactions of their own. The October revolution was a coup d'état, nothing more. Lenin emerged victorious, we are to believe, because he possessed an appetite for power; an organizational and tactical blueprint (dating back to *What Is to Be Done?* of course); an effective chief-of-staff in Trotsky; and a “united and disciplined party.” Those familiar with the historiography of the revolution will quickly recognize this as the traditional view, which recent scholarship has brought into question.

ULAM'S ANSWER to the question, “what was it that at decisive moments has frustrated or flawed the libertarian intentions of Russia's revolutionaries and reformers?” is straightforward—neither the government nor the opposition was able, at these times, “to opt clearly for freedom if its price seemed to involve a threat to the country's unity and greatness.” Yet this theme is not systematically applied to the events examined in the book—nor can it be applied consistently. To be sure, in 1825 some of the Decembrists may have hung back from resolute action because of lingering apprehensions that by damaging the Czarist system, they might bring harm to the country. It can also be argued that liberals who sublimated their immediate political goals in late 1905, before the struggle against the autocracy had been fully won, and who at the start of World War I pledged unqualified support to a government already under Rasputin's sway, did so principally out of a concern for unity, order, and national greatness. However, at the time of the Revolution members of the Russian upper and middle classes who shared such sentiments still constituted only a small minority of the Russian population. Traditional forms of law, order, and nationalism were foreign to the outlook of the masses of workers, soldiers, and peasants who overturned the Czarist regime and who, in the end, facilitated the consolidation of Bolshevik rule. For an understanding of their aspirations and political impact, and of how their “libertarian intentions” were frustrated, it is necessary to closely examine the bottom layers of Russian society in the revolutionary period. Equally important is careful study of the impact of the political, social, and economic crises of the early Soviet years upon such institutions of popular self-rule as the soviets, the Bolshevik party, and, most fundamentally, upon the evolution of the Soviet political system. Regrettably, such central issues are not touched on in *Russia's Failed Revolutions*. □

Douglas Stone

Political Journey

A LIFE IN TWO CENTURIES, by Bertram D. Wolfe.
New York: Stein & Day. 728 pp. \$29.95.

For nearly 30 years, Bertram D. Wolfe was a prolific commentator on Soviet affairs. His *Three Who Made a Revolution* (1948) stands as a seminal work on Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin. After World War II and until his death in 1977, Wolfe published important books and articles on Soviet communism and Marxism, in addition to brilliant critiques on Spanish and Mexican art and economic development.

A Life in Two Centuries is Wolfe's posthumous autobiography. It does not reach the phase of his life when Wolfe attained recognition for his writings on Soviet Russia; it is largely the story of a man who took part in the history of the infant Communist movements in the United States, Mexico, and Soviet Russia. Later Wolfe would break with communism and become a leading anti-Communist intellectual.

The title, *A Life in Two Centuries*, reflects the notion that the 19th century truly began with Napoleon's fall in 1815, that it ended for Europe in 1914 and for the United States in 1917. Wolfe was born in 1896 and spiritually brought up in "the century of peace and progress." Then, for almost 60 years, Wolfe would live in a century that indeed is utterly different. And so, nurtured in one century, he matured in another.

Wolfe's story is a political pilgrimage traversed by many American and European intellectuals between the wars. Wolfe was the gifted child of immigrant German-Jewish parents in New York City. Like so many other bright youngsters of immigrant Jews, he attended CCNY, where he had the good fortune of attending Morris Raphael Cohen's classes in philosophy. After graduation from City College, Wolfe's first political interest was pacifism, just before America's entry into the war in 1917, and he was almost forced out of a high school teaching job for refusing to sign a loyalty pledge. As a direct result of his antiwar sympathies he became the founder and editor of a pacifist journal, *Facts: The People's Peace Paper*, but the journal died an early death, falling victim to the wartime Espionage Acts.

Wolfe joined the Socialist party in 1917, moti-

vated by his antiwar sentiments and the recent triumph of Russia's Bolshevik revolution that claimed to be building a glorious New Mecca. One of the more striking revelations in Wolfe's memoirs is the fact that many of the young people who joined the party that fateful year knew nothing of socialism or Marxism except that it seemed to stand solid and brave against the war.

Gradually Wolfe transformed himself from an antiwar neophyte into a radical intellectual. Disgusted with those Socialists who supported America's entry into the war Wolfe allied himself with the "left wing" of the Socialist party. In 1919, following Lenin's demand that all socialist parties acquiesce to Comintern policy, both Wolfe and John Reed wrote the "Left-Wing Manifesto" that called for the repudiation of "parliamentary democracy" and for the bolshevization of the movement. In his personal account Wolfe admits he was then quite unfamiliar with these antidemocratic phrases yet, nevertheless, accepted them. And so, by the end of 1919, he was one of the founders of the American Communist party. It would be some years before a more reflective Wolfe would question the defense of a totalitarian system.

In response to the Palmer Red Raids of 1920, Wolfe moved from New York to San Francisco where he edited a labor journal. Soon thereafter he and his wife moved to Mexico (without party permission) to teach English in a high school. In Mexico, over the next few years, he became fluent in Spanish, and came to know many of Mexico's leading intellectuals and artists. An especially vivid part of these memoirs is his narration of his deep and long friendship with the temperamental Mexican artist Diego Rivera. Wolfe was an active member of the Mexican Communist movement, and was rewarded for his service by being sent as its representative to the meetings of the Communist International in 1924. He also had the distinction of being the first American ever to be deported from a foreign country (Mexico) back to the U.S. because he was an active Communist.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PART of Wolfe's memoir deals with the second half of the 1920s—his break with Stalin and his expulsion from the Communist International. The party then was largely transformed from a new vehicle of American radicalism into Moscow's obedient servant. Wolfe and others like him, however, believed that by following the Moscow line they were laying the foundations for a more humane America. Wolfe writes:

At every membership meeting I quoted the Comintern cable with uncton, as if it were perpetual endorsement and holy writ. I made it explicit that to challenge this cable was to question the authority of the Comintern. In every city to which I was sent I made it clear that to challenge our group was to challenge the Communist International which had spoken its word.

One of the more extraordinary sections of Wolfe's memoirs deals with his half-year stay in Moscow in 1929 where he and Jay Lovestone challenged Stalin and were expelled from the Comintern. Lovestone went to Moscow in 1929 convinced that he could negotiate with Stalin as one leader of a Communist party with another. He was, of course, gravely mistaken. In a famous speech recorded by Wolfe Stalin said to the defiant American delegation:

Trotsky defied me. Where is he? Zinoviev defied me. Where is he? Bukharin defied me. Where is he? And you! Who are you? Yes, you will get back to America. But when you get there, nobody will be with you except your wives.

After his expulsion from the party Wolfe spent about a decade in the "right" Lovestone faction of the American Communist movement. During the 1930s Lovestone and his followers were in favor of political democracy, for united fronts of Communists and Socialists. They developed a theory of "American exceptionalism," arguing that the traditions and conditions of American life prescribed that American Communists must find their own path.

Lovestone continued to support Stalin's domestic policies hoping that with time a mellowed Stalin would welcome him back. Wolfe asserts that he himself knew better, and that Lovestone was wrong for trying to regain his old position by siding with the brutal dictator. Wolfe recalls how he reevaluated his political ideas, and consequently was transformed into an anti-Communist political thinker. Unfortunately, we do not learn the specific steps Wolfe took to completely disassociate himself from communism.

In *A Life in Two Centuries* Wolfe has provided a valuable document, painstaking and meticulous and most readable. Its many vignettes and episodes tell us much of the author's life and times—of his adolescent rejection of a theistic God; his physical "escape" from the Soviet Union after his expulsion from the Comintern; his illegal hijinks into Spain during its Civil War. Few, if any, American ex-Communists have written so vivid a memoir. □

B. J. Widick

Unions & Radicals: Uneasy Relations

WORKERS IN INDUSTRIAL AMERICA, by David Brody. New York: Oxford University Press. 257 pp. \$14.95.

David Brody is a bright young scholar who has made a serious effort to bring a new perspective to the study of American trade unions. His views are contained in this group of essays, which might more appropriately have been called "Unions and Union Leadership."

Brody rejects any simplistic Marxist view as a hypothesis for understanding 20th-century unionism, although he recognizes the reality of class struggles. Basically, as he states, "I have found myself occupied with the issue of power, with the efforts of laboring people to assert some control over their working lives, and with the equal determination of American business to conserve the prerogatives of management." This view is a break with Selig Perlman's theory of "job consciousness" as the rationale for American unionism. Brody argues well against one school of labor history:

The trouble with the New Left analysis is its failure to recognize that power and interest can be issues of deadly conflict even in a system in which men agree on the fundamentals. This holds for the period James Weinstein covers in *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State*, and is doubly so for the 1930's."

Without satisfactorily providing an answer, Brody also asks, "What was there in the character of American trade unionism that made it an exploiter of radicalism, rather than vice versa?" Earlier in the book he suggests why he can't answer that question. He writes:

The AFL stood four-square on the principle: it was the movement of all the nation's workers. The authority to speak as labor's voice in the public arena belonged to the Federation alone, and it claimed the sole right to grant jurisdictions and charters to national unions. Any union lacking the mark of legitimacy was branded a dual and outlaw organization, an enemy to be given no quarter or sympathy. Why a movement rooted as the AFL was in a narrow and particularistic section of the American working class should have developed so abiding a sense of exclu-

sive legitimacy remains one of the great mysteries of American labor history. . . . The characteristics adopted to meet nineteenth-century conditions proved remarkably inflexible—another of the great puzzles of American labor history—in the face of twentieth-century realities.

Perhaps Brody should have asked a more complex question. What was the relationship between radicalism and American labor? At times radicals exploited the labor movement, at other times labor union leaders exploited radicals. This is not a mystery. It forces us to pay more attention to the role of radicals than is evident in Brody's book.

In his book *Labor and Communism*, Bert Cochran provides more insightful answers to Brody's questions:

Over the years, it was the radicals who initiated the governing ideas for labor changeover, and in the 1930s, when radicals meant Communists in the first instance, [they] supplied front line assault troops in a number of crucial campaigns and battles that brought new unionism into existence. Unfortunately for them, for all their prominence in the CIO's formative history, and their central position in the left milieu for thirty years, the Communists could not create a compelling myth nor bequeath a romantic tradition, as did the IWW or Debs socialists before them. This was not only, and not primarily, because

they were disgraced and repudiated in the cold-war years—that might conceivably enhance their standing for another generation of rebels—but because, with their repeated changes of front and profession at the behest of a tyranny abroad, they fashioned themselves a Jesuitical and chameleon image, leaving a legacy both ambiguous and shady.

Cochran properly concludes that "if the radicals had an impact on the unions," then "unions had as great an impact on the radicals." John L. Lewis used Harry Bridges, but Harry Bridges did quite well in the deal between the CIO and the Communists. Philip Murray used the CP for the toughest jobs in organizing steel, then dumped it unceremoniously when it suited his purposes. Murray exploited the CP more than it was able to exploit him. The United Auto Workers' union represented a third and different case. There radicalism blended with old-style unionism to create a new, dynamic union: that blend was Reutherism.

Given the current problems of the union movement, Brody's book is useful reading for students of labor who want to retain a balanced perspective. His chapters on the uses of power—economic and political—are a reminder that unionism is here to stay and has more viability than current setbacks would suggest. □

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SIMONE PLASTRIK, Business Manager □

Capitalist Enterprise in China

Or How to Cut Wages to the Bone

A reader, Mr. J. T. Wakefield, now living in Dorset, England writes:

I read with interest your article on "China's enterprise zones" (July 11th). I have had some experience of working in the Shenzhen area . . . and found the Technical Planning Authority in Shenzhen most helpful and understanding.

In 1969, some two years after I retired from administrative service with the Hongkong government, I decided to put an idea of mine into practice—to train Chinese girls to tie fishing flies. A small company was incorporated in Hongkong, and girls were trained in the intricacies of tying well over 1,000 different patterns of flies.

At that time piecework rates were low in Hongkong, rents reasonable, and high-quality flies could be made at competitive prices. By late 1979, however, it was apparent that high wages in, e.g., electronics, together with fast-rising industrial costs, meant that we could not offer yet higher piecework rates and still remain competitive.

While my son and I were deliberating on whether to close down our operations, I read your article (February, 2 1980), which analyzed the different systems of businesses that were starting up on the Chinese mainland. It was clear from the facts and figures given that China was our answer.

I returned to Hongkong in March 1980, and, through a Chinese friend, made contact with the Shenzhen authorities who showed enthusiasm from the start for the setting up of a fly-tying undertaking in their administrative area.

I made one particular request: we did not wish to be allocated premises in Shenzhen or its immediate environs. I feared the same wage competition that had forced me to the wall in Hongkong would happen again in Shenzhen. I suggested they find us a location some 30 or 40 miles from the border.

This they did in a matter of days. After visiting the building, they proposed the details of a "labor only" agreement, worked out in only three hours. A draft was signed, there and then. Within two weeks various pieces of equipment (in particular air conditioners, work-bench materials, electric wirings, etc.) were sent up by road (duty free at the border crossing) for the commune's workmen to install at their expense.

By June, we were ready to start our training program. Shortly after training began we did

have some minor frustrations, but all these were solved with a little give and take on both sides.

By August, the draft agreement was converted into a five-year "labor only" contract. The basic terms specify that:

- The authorities would provide premises (an excellent building—rather like a church hall in Britain), electricity, staff accommodation, their own administrative personnel, etc., free of charge.
- No wages would be paid by us to girls during training. (Since it takes up to three months to train a girl to tie flies to a commercial standard, this was quite a concession on their part.)
- We would provide all fittings, etc., to equip the premises, which they would assemble free of charge.
- We would pay the commune authorities an agreed piecework rate per dozen flies tied.
- We would provide all the materials to make the flies and they would see to it that these goods had free entry over the border.

We had four trained girls from Hongkong to teach the local girls; after nine months they have now been withdrawn. We now have a fully trained labor force of some 90 girls.

We are not responsible for hiring or firing the girls; anyone who does not show aptitude is asked by the commune to return to other work in her brigade (the modern name in China for a village). We pay the commune (through their nominated bank in Hongkong) according to the quantity of flies sent out. Usually a consignment is sent out once every three or four weeks. The commune undertakes to pay the girls according to their individual production.

The sum we pay is divided 40:40:20 between the commune (to pay for electricity, administration, etc.), the girls, and the provincial authority, respectively. Girls normally work from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. with two hours for lunch. They are happy to work to 7:30 P.M. when needed, without any change in piecework rates. *Wage rates have worked out about one-eighth the amount we paid in Hongkong.* During the two-hour lunch break, I have often seen girls working in the fields—in most cases in their families' private plots.

You will see from this system that all parties to the operation—we, the commune, the girls, and the provincial authorities—are keen to keep up a high production. Thus, provided anyone contemplating establishing an industry in China can devise a method of piecework payments for the goods he is to produce, there need be little grounds for criticism of laziness, etc. . . .

From the ECONOMIST, London, August 1, 1981 □

LETTERS

Liberal Tactics

Editors:

Dennis H. Wrong makes a convincing case for his belief that the present decline of liberalism in American politics is more than a normal turn in a cyclical pattern (in "How Critical Is Our Condition," Fall 1981). Not only does Wrong point to the obvious defeats in the elections of 1977 and 1980, but he also brings to our attention that in the Democratic primary in 1976, "the most conventional liberal candidate in the field, Morris Udall, seemed to be carrying all the college and university towns while trailing his opponents everywhere else." But Wrong neglects to mention, except indirectly, just why liberalism seems now to be the politics of what he calls "the quiche eaters," rather than the politics of the average American—namely, that liberal policies in the last 20 years have often violated liberal values. Although the ultimate goal of these policies (increased welfare, busing for integration, support of unions) was a more equal society, the immediate effects of these policies were, too often, the denial of justice to ordinary wage-earners.

The example of court-ordered busing for integrated education is too obvious to need repetition. But although such a program is no longer an issue, it will take a long time for many Americans who live in the inner cities and whose children had to bear the burden of busing to forget that the children of most "liberals" attended schools that their parents chose. The same principle applies to welfare payments, Social Security, unions, and civil rights for accused criminals. Although all of the liberal programs in these areas, like integration, were designed to create greater equality, the effects were often the opposite: hard-working adults were paying a large share of their income to support the children of other adults who were escaping family responsibilities. Many young adults were paying for retired citizens who were economically better off than those who were paying Social Security taxes. People living in poorer neighborhoods had to suffer violent criminals who were out on bail or who were saved from imprisonment by middle-class liberals living in safer neighborhoods. . . .

My criticisms imply that liberal programs are only tactics, mechanisms, that may have to be changed in order to bring about liberal goals and values—which do

not change. Thus the recent suggestion by the head of the Transport Workers Union in New York City that his union give up the right to strike in exchange for binding arbitration need not indicate a "conservative" response. If such an alternative results in greater economic security for millions of New Yorkers, without seriously affecting the wages and hours of transport workers, binding arbitration could be considered a step toward a more egalitarian society, certainly a society where workers think of other workers as well as of their own immediate interests.

The same principle can apply to other issues: what may seem like a "conservative" tactic can prove to be more in keeping with liberal values, and it is the liberal values that we want to maintain—not the policies. And once we make this distinction, we will see that millions of Americans who seem to have gone "conservative" have really given up only on our tactics and, ironically enough, not because these tactics were too radical, but because they violated liberal values.

LAWRENCE W. HYMAN
New York City □

Black Intellectuals

Editors:

I wish to respond to several points raised in Martin Kilson's "Politics and Identity Among Black Intellectuals" (*Dissent*, Summer 1981).

Kilson contends that choices between creative and political activity are "particularly acute for black American intellectuals" and posits three strategies for dealing with choice: ignoring politics, total politicization, and marginality. I would argue the choices are no more acute for black intellectuals than for Jewish or Irish American intellectuals. In each instance, the intellectual has freely chosen an identity that is by definition one of creative adversity within his society. . . .

Kilson's discussion of Richard Wright as marginal man, focusing on key issues of Wright's public and private life, is delightfully provocative. Yet it is rather surprising that Kilson drew his biographical information from Constance Webb's *Richard Wright* rather than from Michel Fabre's *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*, generally accepted as the definitive biography. Use of the latter book might have led to slightly different conclusions about Wright's marginality.

Finally, Kilson's seventh footnote alludes to the widespread myth of the "blue-vein" clique at Tougaloo College. I urge those who would know the truth about the myth to consult the photographic archives in the L. Zenobia Coleman Library at Tougaloo.

JERRY W. WARD, JR.
Tougaloo, Miss. □

We are pleased to announce that
BERNARD AVISHAI
has joined our Editorial Board.

The Ideal of Equal Opportunity

Editors:

I hope it is not too late to make a comment on an article in the Spring 1981 issue of *Dissent*. I have just now been able to read Isaac Kramnick's "Equal Opportunity and 'The Race of Life.'" While this essay raises many important and interesting issues, I wish to confine myself to Prof. Kramnick's conclusion.

He ends his defense of a new "moral economy," the economy of "play," which is to replace the "market economy," the economy of freedom (equal opportunity), by quoting "the first great utopian thinker," Plato. My concern is with this quotation. Plato is made to endorse Prof. Kramnick's proposals by the device of misquotation. Readers are not told that Plato's statement is the Athenian Stranger's in the *Laws* or, more to the point, that what is presented here as a complete statement in *Dissent* is a very partial and tendentious version of the actual speech. Prof. Kramnick's Plato is made to be a critic of the "ideal of equal opportunity," which, Prof. Kramnick contends, "envisages life as a war of all against all with persons of worth as victors." This is what in fact the Athenian Stranger says (the phrases that were amalgamated by Prof. Kramnick appear here in my italics):

ATHENIAN: I assert that what is serious should be treated seriously, and what is not serious should not, and that by nature god is worthy of a complete, blessed seriousness, but that what is human, as we said earlier, has been devised as a certain plaything of god, and that this is really the best thing about it. *Every man and woman should spend life in this way, playing the noblest possible games, and thinking about them in a way that is the opposite of the way they're now thought about.*

KLEINIAS: How's that?

ATHENIAN: Nowadays, presumably, they suppose the serious things are for the sake of the playful things: *for it is held that the affairs pertaining to war, being serious matters, should be run well for the sake of peace. But the fact is that in war there is not and will not be by nature either play or, again, an education that is at any time worthy of our discussion; yet this is what we assert is for us, at least, the most serious thing. Each person should spend the greatest and best part of his life in peace. What then is the correct way? One should live out one's days playing at certain games—sacrificing, singing, and dancing—with the result that one can make the gods propitious to oneself and can defend oneself against enemies and be victorious over them in battle. . . .*

The Stranger continues by quoting the poet to support the notion that "the demon and god will suggest things to them [these nurslings] regarding sacrifices and choral performances, thus indicating those whom they should offer games and propitiate, and when they should play each game for each, so as to live out their lives in accordance with the way of nature, being puppets, for the most part, but sharing in small portions of truth." Megillus, the Spartan, interrupts to complain:

"Stranger, you are belittling our human race in every respect!" [*Laws* 803c-804b; Pangle trans., pp. 193-94.]

What conclusions are we to draw from Prof. Kramnick's distortion of the Platonic original? Perhaps only that he was using an inferior and abridged translation. But it could be that he is subtly giving us an example of how honest people would be under his new "moral economy" regime.

WILLIAM E. JOHNSTON, JR.
Wallingford, Pa.

ISAAC KRAMNICK Replies:

I prefer Mr. Johnston's first and more charitable conclusion. □

"New Democrats and New Ideas"

Editors:

I wish to tell my appreciation for Samuel Hux's story in the Summer 1981 *Dissent* titled: "The Democrats and New Ideas." Mr. Hux explains a lot very clearly in a few words. My own experience was gained in Sweden, in both 1950 and again in 1965, when I worked there as a bricklayer to learn more about their co-ops, and their Social Democratic party.

I do organizing for co-ops here, mostly food co-ops. When I try to orient new members to understand the basics to this system of enterprise, I find difficulty. People at times give me a blank look when I try to explain how it is possible for people who invest in an enterprise to own it mutually, and what the meaning is of a co-operative business: to section off the business side of it, and the democratic participation by members. My suspicion is that perhaps Liberal Education does not tell people what business is—how to keep a double entry account, and what all is involved even in running a small shop. When we say that our by-laws are our constitution, it scares people, they think it's too involved.

This may indicate that even on such a small scale as my own co-op, it is not easy to tell people what mutual-ity is, co-operation, and some kind of alternative that challenges the status quo of doing things. However, my hope remains that when a co-op, with even 300 families, manages to do but \$1 million of business a year to satisfy their food needs, and people manage it democratically at that, quite usual people, like many housewives,—it is a source of confidence in people. In only five years, these people are able to understand things about both commerce and democracy they only read about previously.

Our Michigan Federation of Food Co-ops began some 14 years ago in Ann Arbor. Now we have over 400

retail outlet co-ops, and do almost \$7 million in sales of whole food a year. Where else can you buy wheat germ for 25¢ a pound? People work two hours a month to help in our co-op store to reduce costs. (The Internal Revenue Office is trying to say this is taxable income because we save money.)

On a small scale, I want to believe that these kinds of co-op ventures now encompassed in the so-called New Wave Co-ops have a meaning for the potential of democratic socialism. I read that New Wave Co-ops in the U.S.A. did about \$400 million of business last year. We now have our Co-op Bank in Washington, D.C.—a sheer Miracle, me thinks. And I understand the news on the Bank is that the co-ops themselves now can own it.

When we hold regional meetings in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana for our Federation, hundreds of people show up, all ages but mostly the young people,—and we talk about good food, co-ops, and our warehouse workers (over 30 of them) who have their own collective and are represented in the Federation.

At age 65, last April, I am bolder and come right out and tell people in a conversation, if it drifts to such

matters, that I am for democratic socialism. I must say they accept me with this, still let me do business with them as a small mason contractor, and we even get to like each other. Strangely enough, some of the people who listen the longest and are able to easily comprehend the meaning of these matters—are what we call conservative people, even good Republicans. For this reason, I think it may be an error to believe only liberals would be interested in democratic socialism as an idea and a practice to examine. The American people are cautious, but also very often intelligent and patient. Too patient at times. . . .

I used to attend the meetings of the Catholic Worker in New York, and I attended the wake and funeral of Dorothy Day. She let me write about co-ops in the paper. A strong voice for peace is lost to us with her death.—On this, we can somehow survive (?) the national internal problems—but on war and peace, now there is a worry to worry us. — Enough said. . . .

WILLIAM HORVATH

a Michigan Bricklayer □

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PHILIP M. WILLIAMS, a fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, is the author of a biography of Hugh Gaitskell and numerous books on French politics. From the age of 16 and until 1981, he has been a member of the Labour party, and now has joined the SDP.

SHOSHANAH ZUBOFF teaches at the Harvard Business School, and is involved in field research on the psychological implications of computer-mediated work. □



Paul Davis

"The labor-hater and labor-hater is virtually always a twinheaded creature spewing anti-Negro epithets from one mouth and anti-labor propaganda from the other mouth..."

Martin Luther King, Jr.



May Stevens

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Solidarity

December 15, 1981

As we close this issue, word comes from Warsaw that the Communist government, masquerading through its military, has begun a crackdown on Solidarity. The wonderful period, a full 16 months of growing freedom in Poland, has apparently reached its end. The bureaucratic party-state cannot long tolerate independent thought and free trade unions. Detested by the bulk of the Polish people, this wretched government survives only because of the threat of Russian intervention. And the careful preparations preceding the government's crackdown strongly suggest that it was all planned in connivance with, and under pressure from, the sclerotic Communist dictatorship in Moscow.

We cannot know what will happen next, though by the time you read these lines you will know. A complete suppression Czechoslovak style? A general strike led by the secondary leadership of Solidarity, those unionists not yet in prison, which might force the government to retreat? A patched-up deal between the government and a portion of the Solidarity leadership, whose result would be the loss of many of the rights won by the unions?

Everyone with a spark of democratic feeling or socialist conviction must express an intense comradeship with the workers, the intellectuals, the farmers, the entire people of Poland as they confront the troops of General Jaruzelski, behind which, of course, loom the Russian troops. Freedom may now be crushed, but the yearning for freedom will survive. The growth of working-class activism, the cooperation between unionists and intellectuals, the development of autonomous self-government in the factories, these will survive as the tradition of tomorrow.

Solidarity lives as guide, precedent, legend, and inspiration.

I. H.